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PHOTO: ANTOINE AND CHARLIE

In-the-know Parisians and savvy visitors are discovering quirky cafés like La REcyclerie in the city's outer suburbs

Top by **Equipment**. Skirt, shoes, bag; all by **Chloé**. Rings by **Stone**. Earrings by **Repossi**

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An exclusive first look
at a private island
retreat in Doha



ON THE COVER

Photographed by Antoine and Charlie
in Paris' Parc de la Villette
Model: Smita Lasrado
On Smita: Suede coat, shoes;
both by **Gucci**

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Editor's letter

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ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: RHEA SARAN, GETTY IMAGES



TRUTH IN TRAVEL

This is our promise to the reader to be an essential source of honest opinion and must-have information. You can trust Condé Nast Traveller to give you the unbiased inside track, with integrity and authority.

Every time I plan a vacation, I'm faced with a tough choice: Do I go back to a place I know and love or do I venture forth into the unknown? The adventurer inside me wants to check more countries off my bucket list – Fiji! Peru! Myanmar! Yet there are times when a dose of the familiar can be just as satisfying, particularly as the cities I yearn to return periodically to – New York, Paris, Hong Kong, for starters – are in a constant state of evolution.

Beyond these old cities' new cultural attractions, bars, hotels and restaurants, entire neighbourhoods, either recently developed or simply revived, find themselves in the spotlight at various times. Back when I lived in New York, I was a die-hard Manhattan girl. In my years there, I must have made it over to Brooklyn a grand total of thrice – and that's despite a close friend moving to Bay Ridge quite soon after I got there. Since leaving, though, that borough has featured prominently on my itinerary whenever I've visited. After my regulation stops at the Met and Balthazar, I've hopped across the bridge to party – sorry, I mean nonchalantly sip artisanal cocktails – alongside hirsute hipsters on the rooftop of the Wythe, with sweeping views of Manhattan just out of reach across the East River, and have delighted in the (sometimes overly) clever small plates at restaurants like the Mexican-but-not-really-Mexican Xixa in south Williamsburg. Of course, Williamsburg is practically as mainstream as Midtown these days, and the spotlight is panning away to



The Manhattan skyline from across the East River in Williamsburg; La REcyclerie, fashioned from an old train station, is one of the quirky restaurants that have sprung up in Paris' outer suburbs

ever more achingly hip neighbourhoods.

Discovering neighbourhoods on the up was the order of the day on a recent trip to another of my favourite cities. With writer Richard Mellor's unedited manuscript in hand, the *CNT* shoot crew and I followed his unusual tour of Paris (*Hidden Paris*, p 82), forsaking our beloved city centre and heading to the outer *banlieues* (suburbs), where game-changing institutions like the Fondation Louis Vuitton and the Philharmonie de Paris are breathing new life and drawing more attention to the areas around the city's periphery. Here, we encountered quirky eateries and architectural wonders, gritty urban areas and green parkland, most of which was surprising to even the Parisians on our team. It was an adventure in one of the most familiar of cities.

On the subject of rediscovering old favourites, *CNT* contributor Nicola Jackson goes in search of memories from her childhood in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province (*Wild at heart*, p 102), and Laurel Munshower explores the Arabian Gulf's more understated east coast (*Rocky mountains high*, p 22), driving along the sea and through mountains on a route spanning Hatta, Fujairah, the Musandam Peninsula and Ras Al Khaimah. Turns out, there are adventures to be had even in our own backyard.

Which all goes to show that while considering where to go is important, what truly matters is that you're travelling at all.

RHEA SARAN Editor in Chief

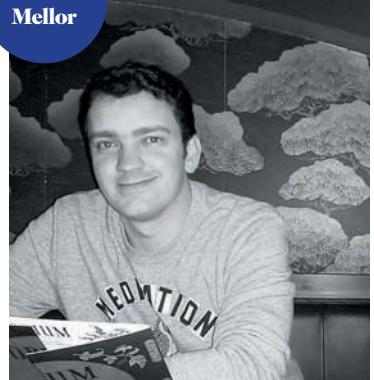
@rheasaran @really_rhea



The Philharmonie de Paris opened in January and is located in the Parc de la Villette in the 19th arrondissement

Contributors

Richard Mellor



Specialising in writing travel, food and trend-based stories about European cities – particularly Paris – Mellor mixes in the occasional beach-focused, long-haul trip to appease his partner.

BASED IN: London

WROTE: *Hidden Paris*, p 82

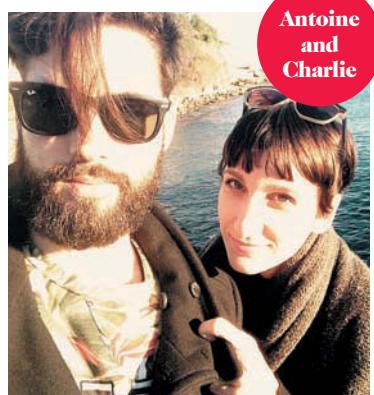
WRITING ABOUT THE PARIS PÉRIPHÉRIQUE WAS EXCITING BECAUSE...

"While central Paris can look identikit – albeit a classic, beautiful identikit – one joy of frequenting the outer arrondissements and beyond is witnessing the hotchpotch of architectural styles and larger green spaces. It's also a perpetual treat to discover treasures far off the usual beaten tourist track."

WHAT'S YOUR TOP PACKING TIP?

"Ever since a friend rolled up for a 20-day India trip with just one small holdall, I've been obsessed with travelling light and not returning with unworn, space-wasting clothes. Reduced back pain, fewer baggage-carousel waits, no time wasted storing luggage at hotels, a feeling of freedom... the benefits are numerous. My routine is to pack as prudently as possible, then remove a third of it. For city breaks I'll only ever take a shoulder bag."

Antoine and Charlie



Born in Paris, Antoine spent his early years in Japan before returning to the French capital to assist big-name photographers. Here, he met Charlie, an artistic director who had opened her first designer clothing store at age 18. Inspired by each other, they decided to combine their vision behind the lens.

BASED IN: Between Paris and Los Angeles

PHOTOGRAPHED: *Hidden Paris*, p 82

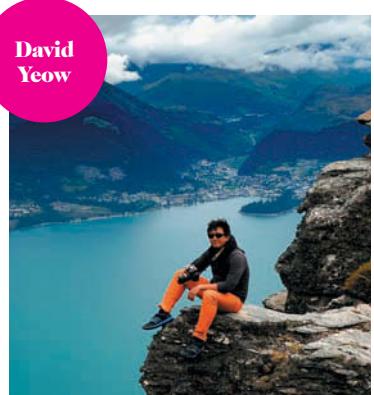
OUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE COVER SHOOT WAS...

"While the shoot went very well, we really enjoyed sharing a drink at the end of the day with the team so we could spend quality time with everybody, relaxing and releasing stress."

WHAT'S YOUR TOP PACKING TIP?

"If we need to pack light, we actually share the same clothes because we're both tall and thin and it's a good way to save space. As we're both children of the sun – Charlie grew up in the south of France and Antoine in Asia – we usually leave our bulky jackets and boots behind and travel to warmer climates. A Leica camera, laptop and swimwear don't take up much space, leaving plenty of room for souvenirs."

David Yeow



Originally trained as an architect in Melbourne, Australia, Yeow now works as an architectural and travel photographer in Southeast Asia and around the world.

BASED IN: Between Kuala Lumpur, Shanghai and Melbourne

PHOTOGRAPHED: *Surf & dine*, p 94

PHOTOGRAPHING BONDI'S CAFÉS WAS MEMORABLE BECAUSE...

"In between shots, I loved exploring the natural rock pools that are spread out along the Bondi to Coogee walk – a blend of open water waves in an enclosed pool, with the summer sun and deep blue skies as the perfect backdrop."

WHAT'S YOUR TOP PACKING TIP?

"Pack items into small bags within a large suitcase so you know where everything is and it's more accessible. I usually keep any essential cables and chargers in my carry-on laptop bag so I can work on the go and never worry about running out of juice. I always pack a suit as well – better to be caught with one than without."

Smita Lasrado



With a client list that includes Chanel, Dior, Vivienne Westwood, Saint Laurent, Givenchy, Chloé, Sonia Rykiel, Longchamp and Carolina Herrera, Lasrado is a successful catwalk, commercial and editorial model, originally from India.

BASED IN: Paris

MODELED IN: *Hidden Paris*, p 82

THE BEST PART OF BEING PART OF THIS SHOOT WAS...

"We did the last shot in a restaurant at The Peninsula Paris, and even though we were tired from shooting in so many locations around the city, the view of the Eiffel Tower in the rain was so beautiful that it felt fresh again."

WHAT'S YOUR TOP PACKING TIP?

"Keep it simple. For me, travel is about discovering a new place, not about dressing up. I like to carry just the basics I need and then buy some new pieces from the country I'm visiting. I pack fewer prints and more block colours so it's easy to mix and match without looking like you've repeated your outfits."



Sara Noël

Noël worked for *Vogue India* then *Vogue Turkey* before setting up her own company, Apolline, producing and consulting for the fashion industry.

BASED IN: Paris

PRODUCED: *Hidden Paris*, p 82

THE PARIS SHOOT WAS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE...

"I was approached with a clear and transparent idea of what was needed and wanted, which gave me all the cards to hire the right people. Whatever the challenge may be, if the people fit, the work flows – and it did."

WHAT'S YOUR TOP PACKING TIP?

"Repot your cosmetics into smaller containers, take a rehydrating face mask to recover from the flight and make sure you have space in your suitcase so you can return with local crafts. Fashion-wise, pack basics, lots of accessories and always take your swimsuit. As my grandmother used to say: 'There could be a swimming pool to dive into and you don't want to miss a chance to enjoy such a blissful activity.'"



Julien Schmitt

Freelance stylist Schmitt grew up in Germany and, after graduating from fashion school, moved to Paris where he worked with stylist Marie-Amélie Sauvé and former editor-in-chief of French *Vogue* Carine Roitfeld.

BASED IN: Paris

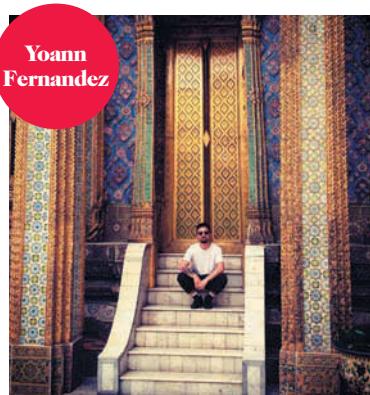
STYLED: *Hidden Paris*, p 82

I ENJOYED STYLING THE SHOOT IN PARIS BECAUSE...

"We got to explore the incredible restaurant La REcyclerie and showcase Paris from a different angle, which was really clever. We all know the city centre so well, but people don't realise how interesting it is to visit the more unusual neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city."

WHAT'S YOUR TOP PACKING TIP?

"I love to go to sunny destinations, so I take light clothes: basic T-shirts, light trousers and swimwear. I lay the clothes out flat in my case so I don't waste space and put my accessories, shoes, bags and grooming products along the side."



Yoann Fernandez

Having grown up in Grenoble, at the foot of the French Alps, Fernandez's fascination with the fashion industry led him to Paris in 2011, where he started working as a studio hair stylist. His work has appeared in international magazines including *Italian Vogue* as well as in advertising campaigns and fashion shows.

BASED IN: Paris

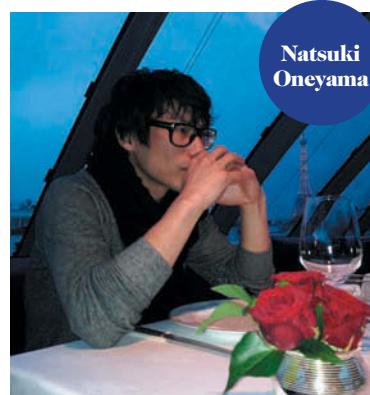
HAIR STYLING FOR: *Hidden Paris*, p 82

STYLING THE HAIR FOR THIS FEATURE WAS ENJOYABLE BECAUSE...

"We had an amazing team with good energy and shot in lots of fun locations around Paris. I tried to create a modern vision of the Parisian woman, creating fresh and natural hair with beautiful movement and texture."

WHAT'S YOUR TOP PACKING TIP?

"When I travel I try to take only what is strictly necessary so that I have enough room in my suitcase for any shopping while I'm away. On holiday, I'll usually take a big backpack to have more freedom, especially if going on a sailing trip."



Natsuki Oneyama

Born and raised in Japan, Oneyama started his career as a make-up artist in Paris in 2007, and has had the opportunity to work on fashion editorial shoots for the likes of *Paris Match*, *Tatler* and *Harper's Bazaar China*.

BASED IN: Paris

MAKE-UP FOR: *Hidden Paris*, p 82

CREATING A MAKE-UP CONCEPT FOR THIS SHOOT WAS FUN BECAUSE ...

"I usually work on fashion or beauty shoots in a studio, so it was interesting and a bit of a challenge to work in several locations on the same day. I went for a modern, fresh, daytime look with glowing, healthy skin, using a soft colour palette. I liked discovering Parc de la Villette and its bamboo garden."

WHAT'S YOUR TOP PACKING TIP?

"I take a Braven 570 portable Bluetooth speaker everywhere I go because it doesn't take up much room, plus music is very inspiring in my life and work. I also can't travel without my iPhone charger – it keeps me constantly connected to my agent in Paris and all my friends around the world."

“
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Kshitija Anup

“I love travelling and photography is my passion so I look for inspiration on whygo.com, a great site for travel guides and beautiful imagery.”

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ROCKY MOUNTAINS HIGH

Crossing hills and valleys, **Laurel Munshower** drives along the Arabian Peninsula's more understated east coast

Photographed by AYAAD DAMOUNI

HERE ARE WEEKENDS WHEN ALL YOU WANT IS a lazy dose of sea and sand – and plenty of spots in Dubai or Abu Dhabi offer just that sort of easy getaway. But then there are those times when a little adventure is what the doctor ordered. Away from its epic landscapes, the UAE's less exposed eastern region is marked by geography just as dramatic as swathes of rolling dunes: Long stretches of straight desert highway are replaced by winding mountain roads exciting enough to rouse the rally driver hiding within. And so I found myself in the driver's seat of a Maserati Quattroporte S, embarking on a journey away from familiar landscapes toward distant purple-grey mountains.▶





HEADING EAST FROM DUBAI TO HATTA, THE at-first predictable desert roads allowed me to get familiar with my sleek steed before graduating to rougher terrain. Undeniably luxurious but minus the ostentation, the car's graceful body, GranTurismo-inspired bonnet and distinctive chrome-bordered grille give it a sporty *oomph* in both handling and style that's usually difficult to achieve in a sedan. Inside, the ventilated leather seats, Bowers & Wilkins surround sound system, a large touchscreen display and rich maple-wood accents set the tone for a sumptuous expedition through four emirates and two countries. A co-pilot – or a couple of back-seat drivers – would be equally comfortable in the spacious four-seat set-up, with ample legroom and individual ventilation, heating and seat adjustment controls.

Crafted at the same factory as Ferrari's engines in Maranello, Italy, the three-litre twin-turbo V6 engine under the hood doesn't hesitate as my foot lightly touches the pedal and I begin to glide down the E44 with the power of 410 horses propelling me forth. Purring softly – the Quattroporte doesn't intrude with the brazen ripping noise often heard as supercars rev up on Sheikh Zayed Road, instead retaining a tasteful, grown-up volume level – the car is nonetheless ready to kick up the pace a notch or two, but given the morning traffic I let a calmer procession prevail.

As the traffic dissipates so does the desert landscape, and the flat scenery beyond the windows gives way to a craggier landscape, bordered by sharp mountain silhouettes. Just under an hour-and-a-half after departing, I pull into the enclave of Hatta, nestled in the Hajar Mountains.



Despite being easily accessible from home, the cosy **Hatta Fort Hotel** (*doubles from AED 497; 00971-4-809 9333, [jaresortshotels.com](#)*) feels like another world. With views of the surrounding peaks, the chalet-style resort offers a number of activities, like 4x4 excursions to natural wadi pools. But I choose, instead, to try my hand at the time-old sport of archery. Given my history with darts – hint: spectators take cover – I wasn't expecting much, but with the instructor's careful directions, the arrows pierce the target with surprising accuracy. My next target is lunch, which I find at the hotel's shaded Café Gazebo: a light mozzarella and tomato panini and fresh pineapple juice, consumed while considering the mountain route to coastal Kalba.



Clockwise from top left:
Rugged Omani roads; Hatta Fort Hotel's green lawns come with uninterrupted views of the Hajar Mountains; tents equipped with beds at Hatta Fort Hotel offer a modern camping experience; the hotel's archery centre



Kalba Fort is one of Sharjah's important historical sites. **Right:** Small boats at Khor Fakkan Beach are available for short tours of the area



The southern end of quiet Khor Fakkan Beach. **Right:** Al Badiyah Mosque is still used today by Fujairah's residents



From Hatta, the curving passages that were carved into mountain walls to form the Sharjah-Kalba Road are a worthy test for the Quattroporte (which has, so far, had it easy). I grip the wood-trimmed wheel, curious about just how well the car will perform in this new environment. It doesn't break a sweat. Highly responsive steering and 50:50 weight distribution effortlessly bring the vehicle around tight corners and I gain a confidence rarely felt during mountain drives. Having conquered this new terrain, we zip through and exit the Wadi Al Helo tunnel to be greeted with sudden views of Kalba on the sparkling Gulf of Oman.

From here, driving north, the coastal road is straightforward. Fortunately, interesting sights along the way break up the journey and offer an opportunity to stretch the legs. The first stop is **Kalba Fort** (sdci.gov.ae), Sharjah's sea-facing defence built somewhere between

150-200 years ago. The two-storey structure is currently being renovated with the intent to make it a more polished historical site within the next year, but it's still worth pausing to study the imposing stone-and-adobe exterior and thin, vertical *mezaghils* (shooting stations). About a 40-minute drive further, I sink my toes into the soft sands of charming **Khor Fakkan Beach**, with the Musandam Peninsula visible in the hazy distance. You can head into the calm turquoise water on a banana boat – or above it with a parasail – but a gentle stroll down the quiet waterfront is just as worthwhile. A short 10km farther up the road, in the emirate of Fujairah, is **Al Badiyah Mosque** (fujairahtourism.ae). Dating back to the 15th century, the UAE's oldest extant mosque is aesthetically unlike any house of worship I've seen in the region. Stout with four helical domes, and constructed out of mud bricks and smooth whitewashed plaster, there's an exoticism about it.▶



Six Senses Zighy Bay's Sense On The Edge is an ideal spot for a romantic seven-course meal

Back on the road and 30 minutes later, we are at the border, at Dibba, about to enter Oman's dramatic Musandam Peninsula. This particular region has been inhabited since the Stone Age and it's easy to see why: the crystalline sea teems with marine life, fresh spring water spills out from wadis to irrigate farms and the ruggedly picturesque mountains backing the coast create a beautiful backdrop. Grey earth turns to rich red as I take off down a dusty unpaved road toward the last stop for the day.

After spending all that quality time in rather plush style, the accommodation for the night at **Six Senses Zighy Bay** (*villas from AED 3,960; 00968-2673 5555, sixsenses.com*) has a lot to stack up to. Leaving my faithful ride at the entry gate – the Quattroporte has many features but high ground clearance is not one – I switch to an SUV to take on the mountain's steep hairpin turns and arrive at this retreat in a secluded cove. Inspired by Omani summer houses, the spacious stone-and-wood villa I'm ushered into comes equipped with a private plunge pool, a bed that would have had the princess of pea fame sleeping until noon and a large outdoor shower – all perfect for decompressing after a long day of driving. As night falls, stars appear and shoot across a sky free of light pollution. Moving to Shua Shack for a traditional Omani feast, the oceanfront table is laden with prawns drizzled with garlic pomegranate, pastry-wrapped Akkawi cheese and succulent, falling-off-the-bone lamb that has been slow-cooked in a sand pit – the latter a delicacy served in the region during Eid celebrations. It's an indulgent end to an adventurous day.

I WAKE THE NEXT MORNING TO A SKY SPLASHED IN VIBRANT shades of orange, yellow and pink as the sun emerges from behind the glassy sea. The road beckons, but I have one last thing to do before checking out: hit the spa. The Aloe Vera Ice Hammam sounds like a good way to refresh before the remainder of the day on the road. With ingredients harvested from the resort's sizeable organic garden, a wash of aloe vera soap aids in exfoliation after which a chilly herbal mixture closes pores and renews the skin.

Reunited with the Quattroporte, I head back for the hills of the UAE, leaving a wake of red dust behind me. Happening upon a stretch of open road that gently follows the landscape's contours, I press the "S" button on the car's centre console. Surging into Sport mode, the growl intensifies, a burst of power thrusts us forward and I feel the steering take on a heightened level of response. In this mode, the Quattroporte can sprint from zero to 100kph in just 5.1 seconds, with the suggestion of more to come. Tempting though it was to go full warp-drive to its max speed of 285kph, responsibility – and the ever-present speed cameras – convince me to hold back as I make my way on the Dibba-Masafi Road.

More than simply the place where the local bottled water comes from, Masafi also hosts a lively Friday market. Amid a cacophony of colour, there's something for just about everyone in this maze of stalls. Grab a cartoonish inflatable orca for a family beach getaway; hydrate on the go with fresh coconut water; support local artisans by purchasing traditional Arabic terracotta pottery; or go on a

You can head into the calm turquoise water on a banana boat – or above it with a parasail – but a gentle stroll down the quiet waterfront is just as worthwhile



Clockwise from top left: Tasteful, locally inspired décor gives Six Senses Zighy Bay an authentic feel; sports like parasailing and jet skiing (*below*), can be enjoyed at Khor Fakkan Beach; the Maserati Quattroporte S takes a break at a beachfront picnic spot near Kalba

Al Hamra Golf Club has a championship course in Ras Al Khaimah. **Right:** Grab a lounger on Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah's well-equipped private beach



All through the hour-long drive toward the Arabian Gulf's coast, the desert and the mountains lie side-by-side, split cleanly by the road running through: cragged peaks on the east side and sand to the west

brief jungle trek through the endless line of plant vendors. You could spend hours rummaging through wares piled high and find everything from trinkets to treasures.

All through the hour-long drive north on the E18 toward the Arabian Gulf's coast, the desert and the mountains lie side-by-side, split cleanly by the road running through: cragged peaks on the east side and sand to the west. This sense of contrast is mirrored along Ras Al Khaimah's beaches, where a line of sparkling new resorts coexist with the laid-back vibe of the east coast.

Arriving at the towering **Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah** (*doubles from AED 1,250; 00971-7-203 5555, waldorfastoria.com*), I'm led by my stomach through opulent, Arabian-inspired interiors to Azure, where a Mediterranean lunch of creamy burrata and fresh seafood skewers complement the al fresco setting overlooking the large pool.

It seems like a good idea to take advantage of the sun-kissed winter day and remain in the great outdoors. The 18-hole, 72-par championship course at **Al Hamra Golf Club** (00971-7-244 7474, alhamragolf.com) takes on a

romantic quality in the afternoon as shadows from swaying palm trees fall long across the green. The course starts directly across from the Waldorf Astoria, and a theatrical view of the hotel beyond a lagoon – that looks serene but proves quite a challenge along the fairway – makes the par-five hole three a course highlight. This distractingly pretty setting also gives me a good excuse for not completing the hole within par.

All good things must come to an end, and so I take the car from the valet and roar away on the trip's final stretch. Whizzing down the E11, the gargantuan multi-lane highway may lack the exhilarating effect of the mountain roads but it gives the car another chance to stretch its legs. As the sun sinks beyond travel-brochure-ready red dunes, I reflect on the eastern region's underestimated mountains and quiet coast, which I'm sure I only scratched the surface of. Inspired by the thought of what remains to be explored, by the time we pull into Dubai an hour later I'm already mapping my next weekend road trip of discovery. **CNT**



Clockwise from top left: One of two pools at Hatta Fort Hotel; carpets come in every style, colour and size in Masafi's market; a mule welcomes visitors to the Musandam Peninsula; a vibrant sunrise at Six Senses Zighy Bay; farms and mountains in Masafi; plants aplenty at the Friday market; views of Musandam from Khor Fakkan Beach; terracotta pottery and kitsch goods for sale in Masafi; kicking up dust while driving through the Musandam Peninsula

Calendar



WORDS: LAUREL MUNSHOWER; PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

March

What in the world is happening this month

3-7

WHERE Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico

WHAT Take to the seas at the largest regatta on Mexico's Pacific coast, the **Banderas Bay Regatta**. At Vallarta Yacht Club's signature annual event, both seasoned sailors and newer yacht owners convene for a few days of cruising, parties and views around the scenic bay.

HOW Charter the kitted-out, 70ft *Mondrian* and get a taste for sailing Banderas Bay. *From AED 21,850 per day; 001-858-227 9595, mondrianyachtcharters.com*

14-19

WHERE Valencia, Spain

WHAT You might want to pack a fire extinguisher when visiting **Las Fallas**, a centuries-old celebration marked by grandiose pyrotechnic displays, satirical *papier-mâché* effigies and a grand finale that sees all of these artworks – as many as 400 – go up in flames.

HOW Emirates (emirates.com) and Qatar Airways (qatarairways.com) fly direct to Madrid from where it's a 55-minute flight with Iberia (iberia.com) to Valencia.

15-17

WHERE Hong Kong, China

WHAT The Asian outpost of one of the world's most recognised contemporary art fairs, this year's **Art Basel Hong Kong** showcases six different sectors, from international artists to regional talents and film. Sharjah Biennial 2015 curator Eungie Joo will be present and part of a panel discussing "Making Biennials".

HOW Enjoy VIP status at the fair's vernissage along with bespoke tours, five nights at the Mandarin Oriental and meals in top restaurants.

From AED 23,775 per person based on double occupancy; 0061-2-9188 9667, inspiredluxury.com.au

21-29

WHERE Oxford, UK

WHAT Opening with Booker Prize-winning author Kazuo Ishiguro talking about his new novel, *The Buried Giant*, the **Oxford Literary Festival** features over 130 events including live illustration performances of children's stories and a talk by Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist and author of the

memoir *In Search Of Memory*, Eric Kandel.

HOW Seasoned wordsmiths shouldn't miss out on the creative writing masterclass led by novelists and literary agents.

AED 14,039 per person for a five-day course; oxfordliteraryfestival.org

24-28

WHERE Doha, Qatar

WHAT In its sixth year, the **Qatar International Food Festival** gives guests a taste of the country's cuisine with the best restaurants, freshest ingredients and hottest food trends all on display in the Museum of Islamic Art Park. Watch for cooking demonstrations by Doha's premier chefs.

HOW Check in to the new Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara, which opened in January, just a quick boat ride away.

Doubles from AED 1,400; 00974-4040 5050, doha.anantara.com

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AROUND THE WORLD WITH...

Monique Lhuillier

The bridal and ready-to-wear designer on stylish cities and where she goes for a little romance

Known for creating fairytale wedding dresses and show-stopping red carpet gowns that have been worn by the likes of Drew Barrymore, Zoe Saldana and Eva Longoria, Lhuillier lives in Los Angeles with her family but was born and raised in the Philippines. We caught up with the designer as she launched her ready-to-wear collection at Harvey Nichols Dubai to talk shopping, skiing and where she travels to escape.

What are some of Los Angeles' hidden gems?

There are so many. I enjoy going to Malibu on the weekends. It's so beautiful to drive along the coast and there are many wonderful restaurants, like my favourite, Nobu, which is right on the beach. There's fantastic shopping behind Cross Creek, and you can also hike up in the mountains from where the view is spectacular – that's something I love to do.

You often ski in Aspen, Colorado – what are your must-dos while there?

The skiing is phenomenal and it's only a two-hour flight from LA, so we go for long weekends. It's a great place to just get away and clear your mind. We usually stay at The Little Nell. It feels very residential and cosy with fireplaces, and it has the whole Aspen spirit with rocks and antlers on the walls. In the summer there's a mini golf course and in winter there's an ice rink. And it's centrally located so you can walk around. In town, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory is my favourite chocolate shop. I often eat at Cache Cache, which is a French bistro; I love their roasted chicken with truffle fries. Campo de Fiori is a great Italian restaurant that does the best pasta and steak.

Where did you go on your honeymoon and would you have chosen differently now?

I have been married for 19 years. When my husband and I went on honeymoon we had never really travelled together because we



were very young, so we decided to go to Maui and stayed at the Four Seasons, which was beautiful. Today, we would probably go to Italy – we love Capri and Tuscany – but we also enjoy St Barths.

What's the most romantic hotel you've ever stayed at?

Without a doubt, the Belmond Hotel Cipriani in Venice. You're in the heart of the lagoon on Giudecca Island and you have to take a gondola everywhere, so it feels like a secluded, private oasis. The food is delicious and there's so much history to the place. Another spot, J.K. Place Capri is very intimate as there are only 22 rooms and it has beautiful views. We enjoy simple things like taking long walks and eating gelato.

What was it like growing up in the Philippines?

It was an amazing experience and I had the happiest childhood. The Philippines has wonderful beaches, amazing food and the people are so loving and hospitable. My parents still live there so I visit them every



The romantic Belmond Hotel Cipriani in Venice.
Below: Lhuillier spends ski weekends in Aspen



'You're in the heart of the lagoon and have to take a gondola everywhere, so it's like a private oasis'

Christmas – last year, they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and renewed their vows, and I did all the dresses. My father has his own beaches in Cebu City, so we go to little private coves.

What do you think is the most fashionable city in the world?

It's such a global world now and everyone is so connected to technology and social media that there's too many for me to pick. I live in LA and people care very much about style. In the Middle East, women love to dress up and style is very important, and I was recently in Hong Kong and women there really appreciate fashion. And, of course, Paris, where I often travel for work.

What's your favourite Paris shopping spot?

I never miss the antiques and flea market, Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen, which is 45 minutes outside the city. I like walking around and seeing all that they have to offer. It covers everything from vintage clothing and jewellery to antique furniture – I always come back with something fabulous. **CNT**

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Colourful cottages
on the Faroese
island of Streymoy

WORDS: JENNY KING; PHOTO: CORBIS

Word of mouth

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Faroe
Islands

FARAWAY ISLES

A total solar eclipse on March 20 will shine a light on this remote archipelago, adrift in the North Atlantic and home to lush green hills, waterfalls, fjords, multi-coloured cottages and an emerging New Nordic food scene

The Faroe Islands, an autonomous part of Denmark situated between Iceland and the Shetland Islands, will be one of only two places in the world (the other being Svalbard in Arctic Norway) where a **total solar eclipse** will be visible from dry land this month. Expect major celebrations following the blackout including an Eclipse Concert at Nordic House, the Faroe's grass-roofed cultural epicentre. These curious islands steeped in Viking lore may be isolated but have recently emerged as an avant-garde foodie destination, drawing epicureans with local cheeses and *raest*, a fermented mutton delicacy. **Koks** (koks.fo) focuses on modern Faroese cuisine like sea urchin with dill, cucumber and apple and pine-smoked langoustine made with seasonal ingredients, and follows the New Nordic Kitchen Manifesto, an agreement signed by prominent

chefs from the region dedicating themselves to "purity, freshness, simplicity and ethics" in cooking.

Aarstova (aarstova.fo), a popular French restaurant using Faroese ingredients, last year launched a new fish house, **Barbara** (barbara.fo), serving the only yearly harvest of the Faroe Bank cod. For a modern, Scandinavian-style stay in Tórshavn – one of the world's smallest capitals, named after the Norse god Thor (the god of thunder) – check in to **Hotel Havn** (*doubles from AED 475; 00298-50 0600, hotelhavn.fo*), a 19-room property in the centre of town with harbour- and ocean-facing balconies.

GETTING THERE

Emirates (emirates.com) and Qatar Airways (qatarairways.com) fly direct to Copenhagen from where it's a 2-hour, 20-minute flight to the Faroe Islands with Atlantic Airways (atlantic.fo)

THE LOCALS' GUIDE TO FLORENCE

Three Florentines show us their favourite spots to shop, eat and drink in their hometown



Mushroom panini at Procacci



Handmade jewellery at Alessandro Dari



Florentine restaurant
Alle Murate

MASSIMILIANO GIORNETTI

Creative director, Salvatore Ferragamo

"I love living in a small city with such a rich artistic past, where there's the possibility of having an *aperitivo* alongside a Renaissance *palazzo*."

CIBRÈO Chef Fabio Picchi offers light versions of Florentine classics like *pappa al pomodoro*, a tomato soup, and *ribollita*, the famous Tuscan stew.

Entrées from AED 200; 0039-055-234 1100

SOSTANZA A 19th-century institution with white tiles and traditional dishes. It's like eating at home.

Entrées from AED 100; 0039-055-21 2691

PROCACCI This icon from 1885 has survived globalisation. It's a sort of upscale deli, with oak panelling, marble tables and delicious sandwiches.

Entrées from AED 35; 0039-055-21 1656

TOMMASO MELANI

Leather craftsman and owner of Stefano Bemer

"Florence's best artisanal shops have a smaller-scale laboratory feel and remain family-owned."

SCUOLA DEL CUOIO This leather school was started after World War II by leather-making families alongside Franciscan monks. The school is right behind Santa Croce, and you can buy leather accessories in the on-site shop.

0039-055-24 4533

ALESSANDRO DARI All his jewellery is handmade, ensuring that each piece is unique – like a sculpture.

0039-055-24 4747

LORENZO VILLORESI He is the creator of some of the most interesting and unique perfumes and lotions in the city.

0039-055-234 1187

UMBERTO MONTANO

Founder, Mercato Centrale, a new food hall in the San Lorenzo neighbourhood

"Among the best aspects of eating in Florence are the organic and seasonal purveyors who keep the food local."

ALLE MURATE Housed within the frescoed Palazzo dell'Arte dei Giudici e Notai, this is the best restaurant in town. Entrées from AED 190; 0039-055-240-618

OSTERIA DEL CAFFÈ ITALIANO It has the highest quality Chianina, Tuscany's local beef, grilled on wood charcoal.

Entrées from AED 130; 0039-055-28 9080

DESINARE The new state-of-the-art cooking school is also home to the city's best vintage and design shop for Florentine tableware and knives.

0039-055-22 1118



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Short story

Desert landscapes and Moorish design were the inspiration behind Saint-Tropez swimwear brand Vilebrequin's GCC capsule collection, **Oasis Les Bains**.

The limited-edition swim shorts, featuring camel motifs, palm-tree prints and beautiful desert sunsets, are available exclusively in the Middle East.



An installation commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation

ART OF THE MATTER

The Islamic Cultural Capital 2014 extends its reign this month with The Past, The Present, The Possible:

Sharjah Biennial 12. Organised by the Sharjah Art Foundation, the aim is to produce and present large-scale public installations, performances and film screenings, and to provide an internationally recognised platform for artists from the region.

March 5 to June 5, sharjahart.org

EAT THIS STREET Southeast Division

When Andy Ricker opened Pok Pok on Southeast Division Street in 2005, little did he know he was setting the stage for Portland's liveliest restaurant row. Here are our favourite new kids on the block



Portland

Wood-fired pies at Pizza Maria

Ava Gene's Chef Joshua McFadden elevates the humble vegetable at his obsessively seasonal trattoria with stand-out dishes like a celery and sunchoke salad with Parmesan cheese, lemon and almonds. If you can't get a table, take comfort in a slice of mushroom pizza bianca at sister restaurant Roman Candle, next door.
avagene.com; romancandlebaking.com

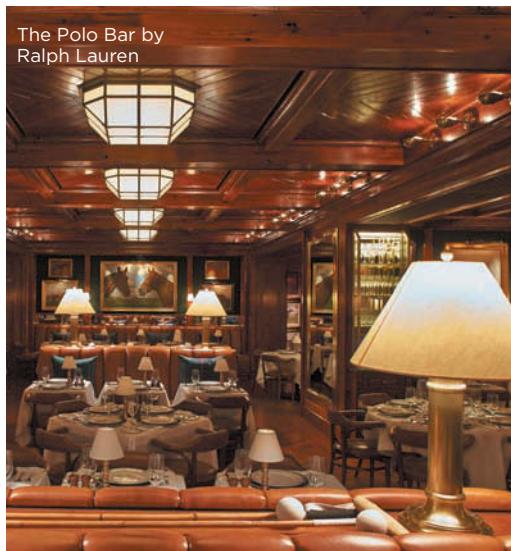
Bollywood Theater Chez Panisse alum Troy MacLarty has done for Indian street food what Ricker did for Thai. Try the *bhel puri* (puffed rice with veggies, peanuts and tamarind chutney).
bollywoodtheaterpdx.com

Pizza Maria In a city of superlative wood-fired pizza, the charred Neapolitan pies here are exceptional. Baker Sean Coyne perfected his craft at Manhattan's Sullivan Street Bakery and Per Se, where he made pizzas for staff.
pizzamariapdx.com

Roe Reserve a spot at this restaurant, hidden in the recesses of the larger restaurant Block + Tackle, for a seven-course tasting menu of modernist seafood including poached lobster with grapefruit custard and *tobiko* over shaved foie gras.
roe-pdx.com

DESIGNER DINING

The new equestrian-themed, all-American The Polo Bar on New York's Fifth Avenue is Ralph Lauren's first restaurant in the Big Apple and is conveniently located next to the brand's flagship store. The American menu is inspired by the designer's favourite foods including crispy kale salad, crab cakes, steak and the signature Polo Bar Burger, with beef sourced from Lauren's Double RL Ranch in Colorado. Intimate alcoves and cosy nooks beside the fireplace make for a relaxed yet refined setting, or guests can pull up a stool at the brass-topped bar for carefully crafted cocktails.
ralphlauren.com



The Polo Bar by
Ralph Lauren



WORDS: HANNAH WALLACE, JENNY KING

Rustic-chic
Albergo Ristorante
Bucaneve

STAY IN STYLE

Zegna oasis

A Zegna suit is shorthand for a certain kind of luxury - understated, beautiful and, above all, Italian. The same can be said of the Oasi Zegna, the family's 100sqkm eco-reserve in the foothills of the Italian Alps, near Trivero, where Ermengildo Zegna founded his woollen mill in 1910. Now, skiers and hikers can again stay on the reserve in the beautifully renovated **Albergo Bucaneve**, a 25-room hotel built in 1963 by Italian architect Luigi Vietti. Meticulously restored to its original chic-but-rustic simplicity using local timber and, of course, Zegna wool, the hotel is an ode to the region's traditions and flavours. On the menu at the antler-adorned dining room is typical Piedmontese food: baked polenta, porcini-studded *carnaroli* risotto and a rich, chocolaty *bonet* dessert made with amaretti biscuits. The hotel is refreshingly spare, a perfect place in which to contemplate the majesty of the rolling hills and the meadows blooming with wildflowers and rhododendrons.
Doubles from AED 230; 0039-015-74 4184, bucaneve.eu



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On the scent

This Aquamarine Travel Spray by haute parfumerie House of Sillage - with its arabesque bottle and handy 7.5ml size - is the perfect thing to pop into your carry-on to freshen up after a long flight.



Aquamarine Travel Spray, AED 1,550,
House of Sillage



The Abu Dhabi boat, which won the first leg in Cape Town, approaches the finish line in the shadow of Table Mountain

Set sail

The Volvo Ocean Race, which started in Alicante, Spain in October and made a stopover on our shores in Abu Dhabi in January, is heating up and will end in Gothenburg, Sweden in June

Considered one of the three most important events in the sailing world, the Volvo Ocean Race, unlike other similar competitions, involves continuous sailing rather than stages, making it a truly extreme sporting event. This season marks the 12th edition, in which seven yachts sail for nine months, covering the 38,739 nautical miles that separate them from victory. The battle is fierce as Team Brunel (Netherlands), Dongfeng Racing Team (China), Mapfre (Spain), Abu Dhabi Ocean Racing (United Arab Emirates), Team

Alvimedica (Turkey/USA), the 100 per cent female Team SCA (Sweden) and Team Vestas Wind (Denmark) contend against the elements and pass through 11 countries, including Spain, South Africa, the UAE, China, New Zealand, Brazil, the United States, Portugal, France, the Netherlands and Sweden. The Abu Dhabi leg might be over, but there are still plenty of opportunities for boating enthusiasts to travel and witness, first hand, the exciting world of the Volvo Ocean Race.
vokooceanrace.com

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The best souvenirs from port cities *Here's what cruise-goers should bring home from their shore excursions*



SMOKED REINDEER JERKY

Because when you're in Helsinki, you're so close to the North Pole



SCOTTISH TWEEDS

Surprisingly, Hamilton, Bermuda has great deals on winter clothes



GRAPHIC TOTES

If you can't ship a table home from Hay House, Copenhagen's iconic design store, these should suffice for bragging rights

Supper club

Go on a culinary tour without leaving town with these local food trails

DINE AROUND DUBAI

Dubai-based blogger and restaurant reviewer FooDiva has stepped out of the virtual world to curate intimate dining experiences with the motto "fun is the new fine dining". Over the course of an evening, guests sample hand-picked dishes - paired with grape - from five different restaurants with varied cuisines, with chefs on hand to explain the dishes as FooDiva shares her own culinary experiences.
foodiva.net/events

SPG SERIOUS EATS

This is a dinner series hosted by hotel loyalty programme Starwood Preferred Guest in secret locations around the UAE with a guest list that isn't revealed until you arrive, making for

an adventurous night out. Participants work their way through a five-course meal paired with grape, based on the theme of the month.

spgserouseats.com; tickets available at limeandtonic.com

FRYING PAN ADVENTURES

The city's original food trail - run by two sisters, Arva and Farida Ahmed - is a showcase of authentic food around Old Dubai. The journeys come with intriguing monikers like Middle Eastern Food Pilgrimage, Food Lovers Morning March, Little India on a Plate, Short N' Sweet Arabian Tale and Marriage of the Meats, catering to varied tastes. Private trails can also be tailor-made for up to 20 guests.
fryingpanadventures.com



Try Middle Eastern delicacies on a food trail with Frying Pan Adventures



Wearable art

Bil Arabi founder Nadine Kanso has teamed up with product designer Samer Al Ameen to create a masculine yet modern men's jewellery line of silver necklaces, bracelets, cufflinks and rings featuring the brand's signature Arabic calligraphy - with a structured twist.



From
AED 800,
Bil Arabi

Anya Hindmarch's London

Her empire of over 50 boutiques stretches from Tokyo to New York, but Anya Hindmarch's bespoke leather goods are quintessentially English – like the designer herself



'I'm a true city girl – I love pavement. I've lived in London since I was 18 and I'm still always inspired by its combination of history and cutting-edge architecture and design. The city attracts an incredibly eclectic mix of people – intellectuals, fashion people, artists, financiers – and it feels particularly vibrant at the moment; it's a real hotbed of creativity. True, the weather isn't our biggest strength, but it rains more in Paris than it does in London – or at least that's what Boris Johnson, our mayor, told me. Another

outdated misconception about London is the food: It's actually amazing, and the variety, from Indian to Chinese to Brazilian, is astounding. The best way to see London is by driving down the Mall toward Buckingham Palace – you can check off about 10 iconic buildings, including Big Ben, the London Eye and the Gherkin. I live in Belgravia, a leafy area right in the city centre. It's not trendy at all, which I like, but it's close to my office, which is over the River Thames in Battersea. I walk through Battersea Park at 7.30am

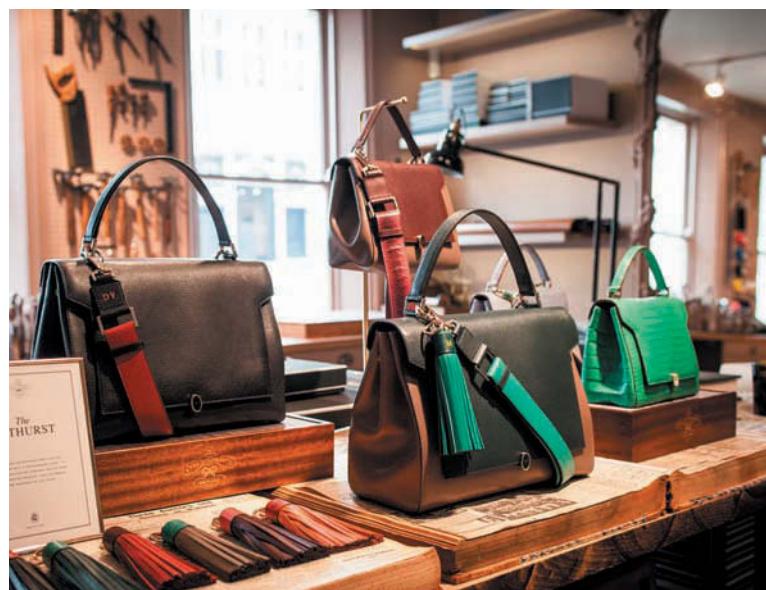
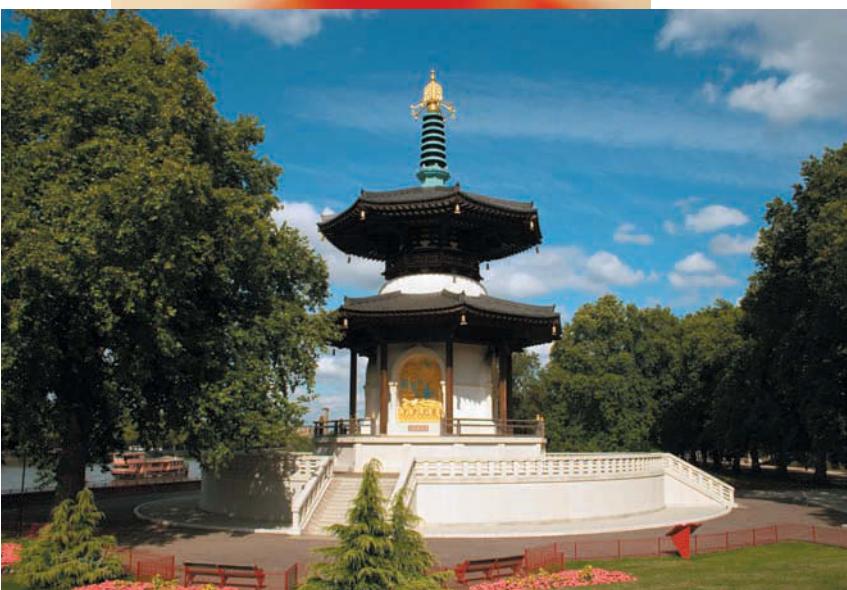
every other day year-round, rain or shine. It's a beautiful spot right on the river, with a lovely Buddhist pagoda – I always promise I'm going to do sit-ups there, but I mainly just lie there looking up at the trees.

BREAKFAST

My favourite place for a power breakfast is **The Wolseley** on Piccadilly, a wonderful, buzzy space full of fashion people. I always have porridge and a plate of berries. I'm also obsessed with the green **Cabmen's Shelters** that have



Clockwise from left: A fruity drink at the Blue Bar at The Berkeley hotel; a green Cabmen's Shelter near the Anya Hindmarch Bespoke store; Ebury handbags (*foreground*) and a canvas Walton weekend bag in the Bespoke shop; a Buddhist pagoda in Battersea Park.
Opposite: The designer at Daylesford organic café on Pimlico Road



served fry-ups and tea to cabbies since the late 1800s. There are only about 13 left and there's one opposite the Royal Albert Hall that you're allowed into. Ask for Tracey, who runs it. She's from a taxi-driving dynasty, and if you're lucky she might make you a cup of tea.

DATE NIGHT

My husband and I go to the Sardinian restaurant **Olivocarne** in Belgravia. I usually order the same things: *vitello tonnato*, an Americano cocktail (a weaker version of the Negroni), and chilli

broccoli. A drink at the **Blue Bar at The Berkeley** hotel in Knightsbridge feels like a treat – it's designer David Collins at his best. And although there's something almost too decadent about a night in a hotel in your hometown, I can't wait to stay at **The Beaumont**. But the hotel I recommend to friends is **The Goring**.

Run by the same family for 100 years, it feels old fashioned and very English.

WEEKEND

We often make a trip to **Petersham Nurseries** in Surrey. They have a great

restaurant with a seasonal menu and a teahouse. (You can help yourself to cakes – they do a delicious homemade poppyseed one.) My other go-to for Sunday lunch is the **Brunswick House Café** in Vauxhall, in a stately Georgian home where everything's for sale. London museums are on a roll, so I like to catch an exhibition or two: Zaha Hadid's Sackler Wing at the **Serpentine Gallery** is fantastic. My favourite places to watch a movie are the **Electric Cinema** and the **Curzon** – you can even take a glass of grape into the theatre.



►TREND ALERT

Sea change

There's something in the water off Africa's east coast: a raft of new and spruced-up hotels

Mozambique's bewitching Bazaruto Archipelago, a protected park with superb diving and brilliant-white beaches, is in the spotlight now that the Johannesburg-based safari outfit &Beyond has taken over Benguerra Lodge. This little hideaway opened

23 years ago on the island of the same name with 12 two-bed huts and developed into one of the sweetest low-key retreats in the Indian Ocean. The lodge closed last October for a total upgrade, including a refit of the old Flamingo – a much-loved traditional sailing *dhow* – and will reopen in April. Over on neighbouring Bazaruto Island, the former Indigo Bay hotel, the most sophisticated property in the area when it opened back in 2001, has been relaunched as Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort & Spa.

And now news reaches us that the Vilanculos Coastal Wildlife Sanctuary, just south of the archipelago, has caught the eye of Singita's Luke Bailes, who's been on the lookout for a beach retreat to add to his portfolio of super-slick safari lodges in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Though still a work in progress, he says it will "deliver a marine and wildlife experience in one, with a strong focus on restoration and conservation". Given Singita's past hits, we expect great things.

By design

Her gallery, Musk & Amber, is based in Tunisia but **Lamia Bousnina Ben Ayed** travels the globe in search of inspiration and new talent. CNT caught up with the gallerist at Dubai's Downtown Design

CAN YOU NAME SOME DESIGNERS FROM THE MENA REGION THAT WE SHOULD BE KEEPING AN EYE ON?

There are a lot of designers in Morocco: Hicham Lahlou is one that stands out. And I also like Nada Debs from Lebanon. She lived in Japan for a long time, so there's a fusion of the Japanese minimalist influence. I have so many other names in mind as I am focusing on showcasing designers from around this region.

WHAT DESTINATIONS ARE DESIGN HOTSPOTS FOR YOU?

There is big potential in Lebanon, Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia, and I think Dubai is a nice platform for the designers from these areas to come together. It's an amazing place to showcase all their work.

ARE THERE ANY FAR-FLUNG DESTINATIONS THAT ARE ALSO OF INTEREST?

I would like to mix Middle Eastern designers with Latin American designers. I'm curious about Latin America because I think there's a lot of potential there. There's a rich history of craftsmanship and a lot of specificity in each country in the region – it's so varied, like in the Middle East. For instance, Tunisia and Morocco are similar, but there are differences. They have their own signature with young designers trying to evolve traditional design – and it's the same in Latin America. This is the future of design: it will be universal.



The waterfront Ciragan Palace Kempinski Istanbul

WHERE DO YOU TRAVEL FOR INSPIRATION?

I like to travel to Europe, the Americas, and I love the Middle East. Two cities I find inspiring are Istanbul and Beirut – there is a fabulous mix of East and West. It's magic.

WHAT SORT OF SOUVENIRS DO YOU LIKE TO COLLECT?

I like to have something traditional and specific to the country. It can be a piece of art, sometimes jewellery, photography. Carpets are a stand-out purchase in Turkey, Morocco and Iran.

YOUR FAVOURITE DESIGN HOTEL?

I like minimalism, but I also like the old traditional ones. So, in Milan I like the Bulgari Hotel, but in Turkey I like the Ciragan Palace Kempinski Istanbul. Also, Hotel Albergo in Beirut, where each room has its own unique design: a Chinese room with antiques from that country, an Indian room with a mix of oriental and Asian, and so on.



Lebanese designer Nada Debs. **Above:** The designer's Ali Baba sideboard design



Travel mate

Jonathan Anderson's first travel collection for storied Spanish brand Loewe is very much in keeping with his approach to apparel: The unisex bags, ranging from duffels to trolleys, are suited to any globetrotter. Stylish and functional with engraved padlocks and inner pockets to stow travel essentials, each piece is also designed to comply with airplane cabin specifications.



From left: Trolley Bag, AED 16,000, Cross Soft Suitcase, AED 14,000; both Loewe

TICKET TO PARADISE

WITH THE LUXURIOUS PRIVATE JET FACILITIES OF SHANGRI-LA'S VILLINGILI RESORT AND SPA, MALDIVES, THE SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR FIVE-STAR SERVICE



The only luxury retreat in the Maldives with its own executive terminal, Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa's private jet arrivals at Gan International Airport leave the nuisances of Male's crowded terminal, like immigration queues and slot restrictions, behind. Located in the Addu Atoll and a mere five-minute private speedboat ride from the resort, the impeccable service the world's jet set have come to expect from the Shangri-La brand is apparent from the moment you land with private lounges, efficient on-site immigration and baggage screening, around-the-clock FBO facilities, personalised catering from the resort's Executive Chef and the knowledge that your holiday pampering isn't limited to the resort's grounds.

Bespoke benefits continue with the Getaway and Escape packages created exclusively for Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa's private jet clientele – including welcome bubbly, daily massage and "Dine By Design" indulgences, unlimited golfing and more. Accommodation in a lavish presidential suite – 570sqm Villa Muthee or 957sqm Villa Laalu – with a dedicated villa host completes the VIP island experience.

From the blissful absence of holding patterns to enjoying tailor-made cuisine during your flight home, Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa combines flawless luxury with matchless private jet benefits to create a one-of-a-kind island experience from touchdown to takeoff.





Tourists and locals frequent the Art Deco Kavárna Slavia for coffee and live piano music

SLICE OF HISTORY

Prague's venerable coffee houses were the centres around which life revolved in the early 20th century.

Kathryn Tomasetti stops by for some *sachertorte* and discovers that, all these years later, the historical cafés are still chock-full of charm

During the dying days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, life in Prague centred around the city's opulent coffee houses. Albert Einstein and Franz Kafka were among the authors and intelligentsia that wrote, debated and consorted in these cafés. With the rise of communism in the Forties, there was a move to snuff out the boho venues; some were boarded up or turned into anodyne offices – but their spirit lived on. When the Czech Republic was established 22 years ago, the finest of Prague's beloved coffee houses were re-launched and, ever since, they've been a central part of the city's artsy scene.

The historical cafés remain a window into Prague's past, their ornate architecture largely UNESCO-protected. On the menu are traditional Czech and Bohemian savoury dishes, pastries, cakes and a lengthy list of seriously buzz-inducing coffees. Non-smoking sections and free Wi-Fi are a nod to the 21st century, but these atmospheric enclaves continue to flourish as in the old days, as a place to laugh with friends, people-watch for an hour or simply dream away a lazy afternoon.

Café Louvre

The headquarters of Prague's early-20th-century intelligentsia, the elegant Café Louvre opened in 1902. Not



A full breakfast at
Café Savoy, popular
on weekend
mornings



A view of Prague
over the Vltava River

only was the café equipped with a chess room and a first-class billiards hall, with a dozen handcrafted tables imported from America, but each day two classical concerts were performed here for an audience that included Franz Kafka, Albert Einstein (who was working at the Prague German University from 1911 to 1912), Czech actor Eduard Vojan (who had a table permanently set aside for his use) and local science-fiction author Karel Čapek. The Louvre encouraged its scholarly patrons to make use of the café as their own personal office, with an on-site writing room and a telephone at their disposal.

This vibrant centre of life was shut down in 1948, thanks to a communist coup in February, with its furniture flung violently out the gorgeous glass windows. In the ensuing years the space functioned as offices, before being fully renovated and restored to its former grandeur, reopening in 1992.

Today, large archways splice the pink cerise décor. There's notepaper on every table so visitors – like the Louvre's original patrons – can jot down ideas if so inspired. Hip mums meet for lunch on the petite al fresco patio, tiny tots in tow; more sombre business deals are made (and broken) in the adjacent dining room, under the watchful gaze of vintage posters. The Louvre's main menu dates from a century ago: classic dishes include *svíčková na smetaně* (beef sirloin in a creamy carrot sauce) and the house cheesecake with peaches and Viennese cream. Yet the café is decidedly modern, too, flagging items that are gluten-free and shaking up its own homemade cocktails. 00420-724-05 4055, cafelouvre.cz

Café Imperial

It would be an understatement to say Café Imperial was the talk of the town when it first opened its Art Deco doors in 1914. Covered

These historical cafés with ornate architecture remain a window into Prague's past. On the menu are traditional Czech and Bohemian savoury dishes, pastries, cakes and a lengthy list of seriously buzz-inducing coffees

floor to ceiling in creamy porcelain tiles, the unique décor depicted Moorish motifs, ranging from exotic flowers to a rising phoenix. Jaws dropped as patrons cast their eyes skyward to take in the golden floral mosaic that arched above, intricately crafted from tiny ceramics.

The Imperial celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2014 and it remains just as striking today. The building itself is both a Czech National Monument and UNESCO-listed, its architecture an unusual combination of Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Cubism.

Among the café's bronze figurines, distinguished locals mix with American tourists trickling in from the luxurious Hotel Imperial next door. Discreet staff dish up age-old Czech cuisine such as delicately braised veal cheeks, prepared by celebrity television chef and co-owner Zdenek Pohlreich. Unmissable is Pohlreich's Cake Imperial, a chocolate-dipped chocolate cake layered with dates, its flavour reminiscent of salted caramel.

For decades the café was perhaps best known for its quirky *Saturnin's Bowl*. Inspired



The regal
Café Imperial
celebrated its 100th
anniversary in 2014

by Czech author Zdenek Jirotka's popular novel *Saturnin* (published in 1942), this pile of stale doughnuts could be purchased for 1,943 CZK (AED 290) and playfully pelted at fellow diners. Alas, since the Imperial's renovations in 2007, the bowl of fun is no longer on the menu. 00420-246-01 1440, cafeimperial.cz

Grand Café Orient

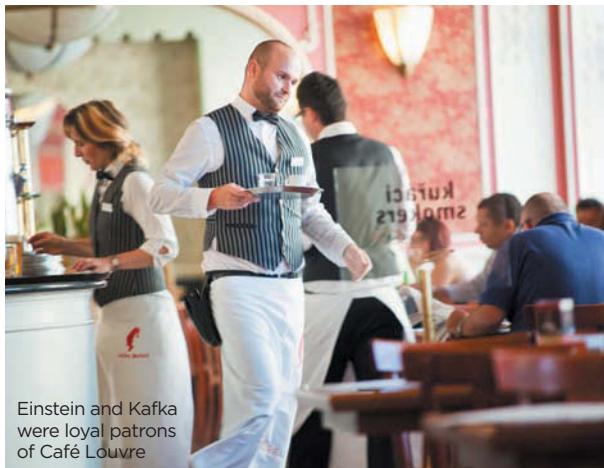
The Grand Café Orient is the world's finest existing example of Cubist-style design. Tucked away on the first floor of the House of the Black Madonna, a former department store designed by Cubist starchitect Josef Gočár in 1912, the fashionable coffee house – inspired by artworks created by the era's most celebrated artists, like Pablo Picasso – opened the same year. However, the popularity of Cubism rapidly waned and the café closed down less than a decade later.

In 2005, new proprietor Rudolf Brinek recreated the Grand Café Orient in all its early-20th-century glory: bench seating was reupholstered in candy-striped green and Cubist chandeliers were dusted down. The ➤

Food



Grand Café Orient's signature Cubist wreath cake



Einstein and Kafka were loyal patrons of Café Louvre



Candy-striped green upholstery and Cubist chandeliers at Grand Café Orient

café's superb central location, at the heart of Prague's Old Town, pulls in a range of patrons, from laptop-toting college students to chatty resident expats. Come lunchtime there's always a restrained jostle for a handful of tables along the café's narrow balcony. Bow-tied waiters bustle about, serving up elaborate coffee concoctions on stainless steel trays, an elegant allusion to a bygone era.

The menu covers modern coffee house fare, with desserts undoubtedly the order of the day. In autumn, look out for flaky quince pastry pie or classic Czech *jablečný závin* (apple strudel). Summer offers seasonal plum cheesecake and cucumber lemonade. Strong coffee paired with *kremrole* (traditional cream-filled pastries) is popular year-round. The house speciality is the Grand Café Orient's own unique *kubistický věneček*, a traditional Czech cake that translates as Cubist wreath. 00420-224-22 4240, grandcafeorient.cz

Café Savoy

Slip into the Café Savoy any weekend morning and you'll be in friendly company. Families swap stories, along with plates of scrambled eggs and thick French toast. A young couple – looking effortlessly chic in this season's boho designer threads – bump foreheads as they deliberate over the Savoy's tome of a tea menu. An elderly

local sips a steamy jug of hot chocolate and slips morsels of *ořechový dort* walnut cake to his spotted pup dozing under the table on the herringbone wooden floor.

Opened in 1893, the stunning Café Savoy boasts seven-metre-high Neo-Renaissance ceilings, which were preserved under plaster during the country's communist era, and the vast windows and oversized chandeliers are still intact. Downstairs, a large picture window overlooks the slapping, kneading and dusting of dough in the on-site bakery.

Service may be brusque, yet unlike the menu offerings in some other cafés – which can take a back seat to décor – the Savoy's dishes are well worth seeking out on their own merit. Lunch specials range from potato gnocchi with poppy seed to pear compote; there's a dedicated gourmet menu (dishes like truffle cappuccino with grilled duck liver and apple reduction), top-notch speciality coffee and a pastry case where a mere browse can weaken the hardest of knees. 00420-257-31 1562, cafesavoy.ambi.cz

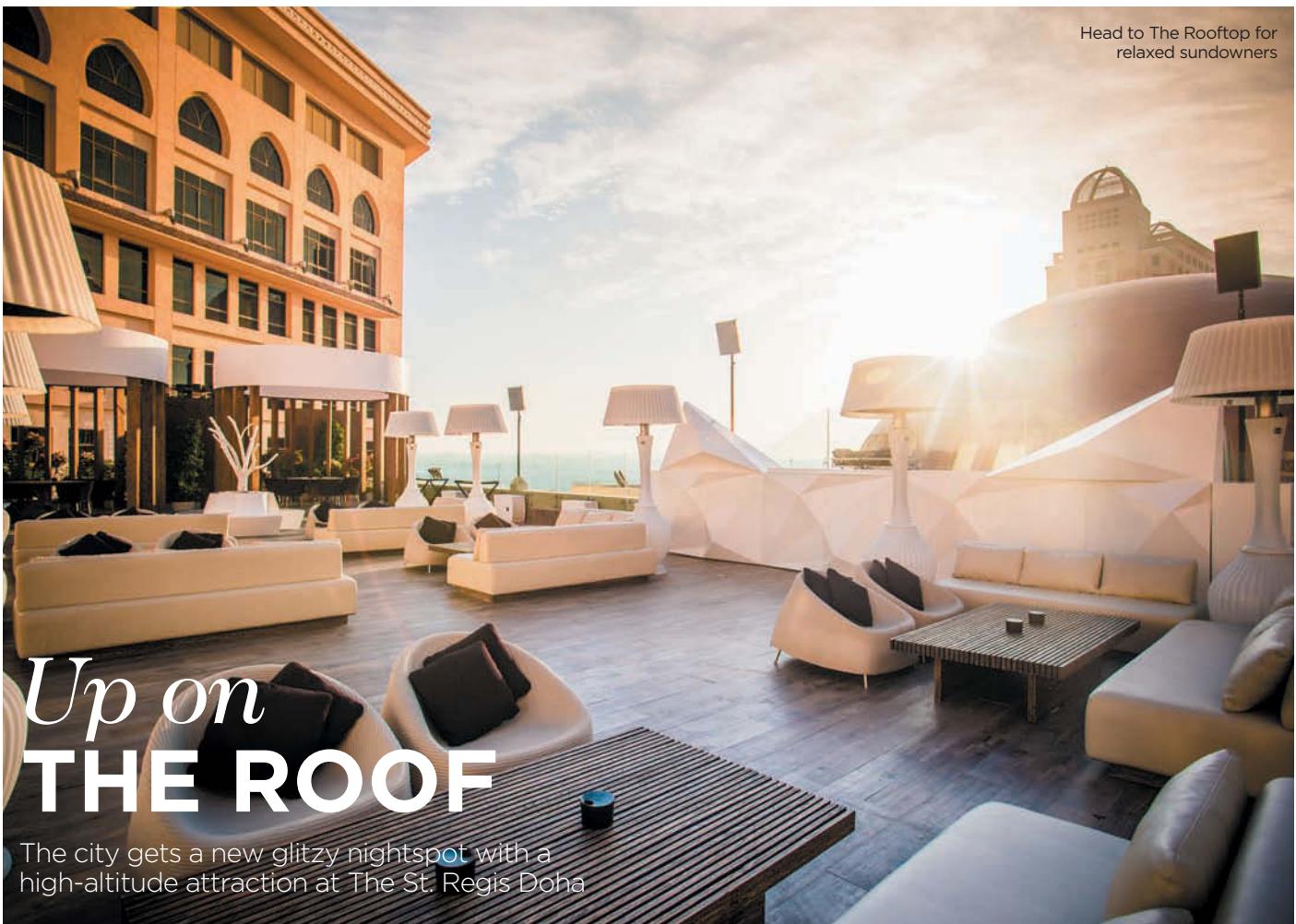
Kavárna Slavia

The oldest of Prague's coffee houses, Kavárna Slavia's location couldn't be prettier. The popular café sits on the banks of the Vltava River, its plate glass windows peering out toward the Charles Bridge and Prague Castle

beyond. Perhaps even more enticing is the ornate edifice over the road: the city's National Theatre. Pop into the Slavia and you'll soon spot Czech actors and opera singers unwinding post-performance, plus a scattering of literary patrons either buried in a book or sketching storylines on an iPad.

Poets, playwrights and revolutionaries have frequented the Slavia since it opened in 1881. Big names include novelist Rainer Maria Rilke, Václav Havel – who went on to become the Czech Republic's first post-communist president – and Czech composer Antonín Dvořák. Demonstrations during the Velvet Revolution in 1989 even took place bang in front of the café, offering its patrons front-row seats.

Tourists and locals alike now sip coffee, hot chocolate and warm apple cider as they enjoy the Thirties Art Deco ambiance. Cherry-wood panelling and oversized mirrors are juxtaposed with temporary photo exhibitions across the café walls and there's live piano music every evening. Snag one of the river-facing tables, each one also with a prized view of Viktor Oliva's 1901 painting "Absinthe Drinker", and order Czech-style baked duck with potato dumplings, braised chicken in pepper sauce or the coffee house's own version of chocolate Viennese *sachertorte*. 00420-224-21 8493, cafeslavia.cz CNT



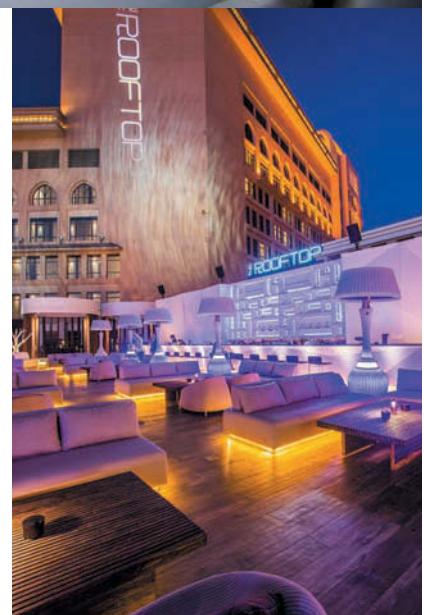
Head to The Rooftop for relaxed sundowners

Up on THE ROOF

The city gets a new glitzy nightspot with a high-altitude attraction at The St. Regis Doha

In the heart of West Bay, The St. Regis Doha boasts a stylish rooftop terrace fusing the urban chic of New York, Beirut and London, making it the latest addition to Doha's al fresco scene. Overlooking the city's vibrant skyline, guests can savour inventive cocktails under the stars or choose from a selection of signature beverages, all served in exclusively designed handmade glasses. The Rooftop comes alive to fresh, international sounds from resident DJ Soph-Eye Richards, who keeps the beat going until the early hours with the latest club mixes. Popular international DJs Darin Epsilon and Casie Lane have created special mixes for the urban lounge, which are available on SoundCloud so you can relive the experience at home. This after-dark spot, open from Wednesday to Saturday, is taking Doha's nightlife to new heights.

For more information call 00974-4446 0226 or visit rooftopdoha.com



Above: Come nightfall, unwind to international mixes from the resident DJ under the stars.
Left: The Rooftop's lounge and terrace offer views of Doha's skyline

CNT
EXCLUSIVE

MARSA MALAZ KEMPINSKI, THE PEARL – DOHA

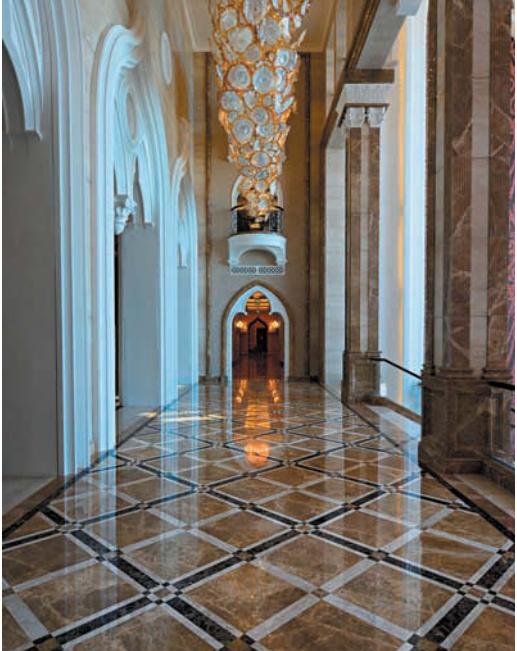
Ahead of its official launch this month, **Jenny King** gets a sneak peek at Doha's most stylish new address, perched on its own private island

Where to stay

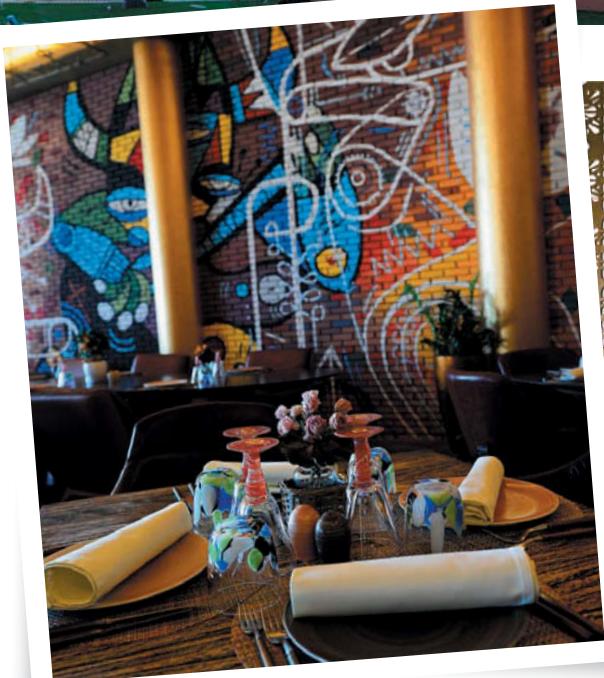
FIRST LOOK ■ ROBERTO COIN ■ HANOI

PHOTOS: ANGEL MALLARI

Cigar lounge Bohemia
serves inventive
molecular cocktails



Clockwise from top: A 60ft bronze horse by an Iraqi artist welcomes guests on arrival at the hotel; Marsa Malaz features 3,000 pieces of art including this hand-made Murano glass oyster chandelier from Italy; relaxed dining at Sawa; a graffiti wall at experimental Spanish restaurant El Faro



PULLING UP TO THE PALATIAL MARSALAZ Kempinski, in a sleek BMW decked out with cream leather interiors, and being greeted by a 60ft bronze Arabian stallion by Iraqi artist Ahmed al Bahrani certainly set the tone for what was to be an extravagant stay. As I was swiftly relieved of my bags by a bell boy in a sharp beige suit, bow-tie and hat to match the muted décor of the cavernous lobby, my eyes wandered across the museum-worthy array of sculptures, artworks and intricate chandeliers – just some of the hotel's 3,000-strong collection.

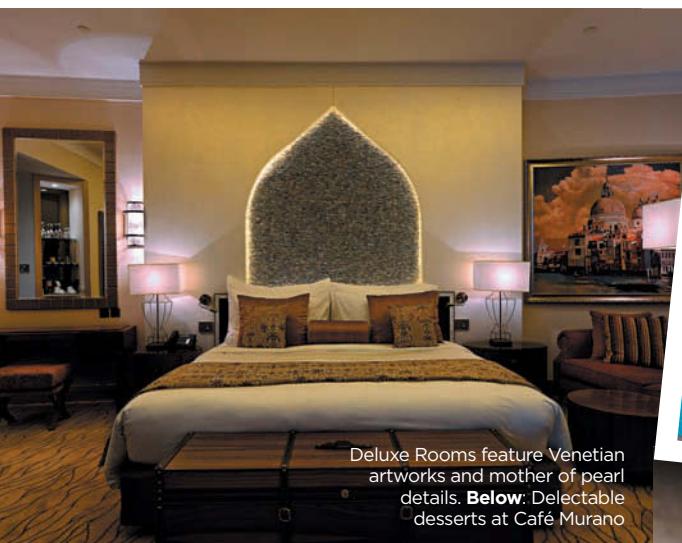
Bypassing the traditional check-in process, I was whisked straight to my room where my butler was waiting by the door with a hot towel and refreshing lemon and mint drink. After filling out a quick form and having a tour of my room, I was left to tuck into the platter of cheese, olives, nuts, chocolate and fresh fruit – a welcome treat after flying in from Dubai earlier that day. Despite being the hotel's

'We have our own local farm producing organic ingredients and everything is made in-house, including the Arabic pastries'

"entry-level" accommodation, the Deluxe Room – at 800sqft – feels as spacious as a suite, with a king-sized bed and sofa area, a work desk, a dressing table and wardrobe area, plus a separate bathtub (with flat-screen TV) and rain shower. And that's not including the large, Venetian-style balcony overlooking the six pools (including one Jacuzzi pool), private beach and the Riviera-esque Pearl-Qatar. On the splashier end, there's the Panoramic Suite with its 180-degree views across the water; two Presidential Suites with private lap pools; or,

even more indulgent, are two 7,000sqft Royal Suites with custom-made circular beds in the master bedroom, an oversized whirlpool bath on the private open-air terrace and marble bathrooms stocked with Bulgari amenities.

When it comes to dining, you're spoilt for choice with 11 restaurants, cafés and bars, including Sawa ("together" in Arabic), the spot for a healthy breakfast or an al fresco brunch served up by executive chef Mattias Roock, who spent a year training with Gordon Ramsay; El Faro ("the lighthouse"), a stylish Spanish eatery with a Picasso-inspired, hand-painted graffiti mural and an inventive menu including vermicelli noodles *paella*; and Al Sufra ("the dining room"), the signature Levant restaurant. "We have our own local farm producing organic ingredients and everything is made in-house, including the Arabic pastries," says executive assistant manager for F&B Steven Pieters. Also, look out for three stand-alone outposts –



Deluxe Rooms feature Venetian artworks and mother of pearl details. **Below:** Delectable desserts at Café Murano



Clockwise from top: The hotel has six swimming pools and a private beach; the grand lobby staircase; executive chef Mattias Roock in action at Sawa's open kitchen

pan-Latin Toro Toro, traditionally Italian Antica Pesa and the acclaimed Japanese restaurant Nozomi – adding an international flavour to the property's culinary mix. Come nightfall, don't miss the chance to try one of the theatrical mixologist Simon Mhaidat's molecular creations at the sophisticated cigar lounge, Bohemia.

Though I was travelling on my own, the hotel is well-equipped for families: Little ones are catered to with a technicolour play centre offering arts and crafts, sushi-making classes, a mini brunch, birthday parties and fitness and wellness programmes. If you are feeling energetic, too, the adults' fitness centre includes a spacious gym with touchscreens on the cardio machines that can be programmed to different locations, such as the city streets of San Francisco or a jungle, to make your run a bit more interesting. Guests also enjoy complimentary fitness classes like Pilates or Zumba, and there is a track around

the circumference of the hotel for jogging and for the latest fitness craze from Los Angeles, StreetStrider – a bicycle-cum-cross-trainer hybrid. The hotel also has plans to introduce snorkelling, kayaking, kitesurfing and sunset yoga on one of the two jetties as well as sunset golf using a dissolvable golf ball filled with fish food.

But perhaps the pièce de résistance is the Spa by Clarins – the first in the Middle East – with 23 treatment rooms (each with its own shower and bathroom), a spa menu utilising Clarins' natural, organic products, separate male and female areas, a Zen garden, aromatherapy steam rooms, a Moroccan hammam with colour therapy, slumber suites with starry lights and relaxing music, and a cocoon bed with air pressure that you can tailor to your needs to ensure your stay is just that extra bit more serene.

Doubles from AED 1,820; 00974-4035 5555, kempinski.com/marsamalaz CNT

ONE TO WATCH

Taking up the entire sixth floor of the property, there will be panoramic views of the Pearl-Qatar and the Arabian Gulf from Illusion, the hotel's 10,000sqft club lounge and rooftop bar, when it opens this autumn. Conceptualised by architectural design company Rockwell Group, the club will feature two expansive open-air terraces with raised VIP areas, an illuminated 52ft marble show bar, a sleek dining area with a large sharing table, plus a lounge area and dance floor set under the hotel's grand dome.

GETTING THERE

Qatar Airways (qatarairways.com), Emirates (emirates.com) and Etihad (etihad.com) fly direct to Doha from the GCC

Hyatt Regency Dubai Creek Heights

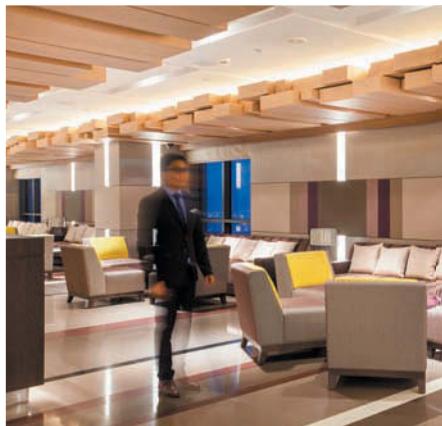
Set to open on March 1, we uncover 10 things to know about this contemporary Creek-side hotel



Glass dome ceilings fill the hotel with natural light.
Right: Relax at The Pool Bar



The fitness centres come with panoramic views



From far left:
The Regency Club Lounge; bathrooms offer city views; the open kitchen at Sufra



The lounge area of the Royal Suite. **Above:** Foliage climbs the walls in the lobby

1 Nysa spa features a hydrotherapy "water temple", a traditional hammam with a scrub room and mud bath area, three plunge pools, a vitality pool, an ice fountain, experience showers, heated ergonomic loungers and regional therapies.

2 The Lobby Lounge is a garden-themed space where you can enjoy a light meal of sandwiches and salads washed down with tea and coffee under a striking glass dome, which fills the room with natural light.

3 The Regency Club Lounge on the 32nd floor offers Regency Club Room guests priority check-in and check-out, daily breakfast, all-day refreshments, evening cocktails and canapés and concierge services.

4 The Pool Bar is the place to unwind al fresco with healthy bites, fresh juices and chilled cocktails. Relax poolside on the terrace with views of the city skyline or keep cool in the swim-up bar.

5 The Royal Suite, taking up a whole floor at almost 4,000sqft, is the jewel in the crown of the hotel's 464 rooms and suites, which all come with panoramic views and modern furnishings.

6 Market24 is the 24-hour deli and coffee shop with an interactive open kitchen dishing up salads, pasta, pizza and international desserts to eat in or grab and go.

7 Two ballrooms and 13 meeting suites are suited to conferences, weddings or galas, and come with a team of event specialists.

8 Sufra, the bright Levant- and Mediterranean-inspired restaurant overlooks Dubai Creek Park and serves wood-fire oven baked *fatayer*, Iranian mixed grill and Greek *kleftiko*, finished with *baklava* and tarts.

9 Three fitness centres – for men, for women and one mixed-use – come with touch-screen technology and personal trainers, while the fitness studio offers group exercise classes.

10 La Tablita, the hotel's Mexican restaurant, will have live entertainment on weekends to accompany its menu of tacos, ceviche and fajitas when it opens this summer.

Doubles from AED 950; 00971-4-553 1234, dubaicreek.regency.hyatt.com



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Where to stay

BED-HOPPING WITH...

Roberto Coin

The Italian jewellery designer on five hotel gems



➲ Aman Canal Grande Venice

"Venice's glorious past is represented in this gorgeous hotel. With one of the most iconic locations in the city, this waterfront property perfectly mixes ancient frescoes with modern furniture. Each room is unique and staying here is always unforgettable."

Doubles from AED 3,860; 0039-041-270 7333, amanresorts.com

➲ Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues Geneva

"This stunning building overlooks the most beautiful lake in the world. You are just steps from the rue de Rhône, the best place to buy one of my favourite items: watches. I love the lounge bar of this hotel – the atmosphere is unique, the service is excellent and there's an inventive cocktail menu."

Doubles from AED 2,900; 0041-22-908 7000, fourseasons.com/geneva



GENEVA

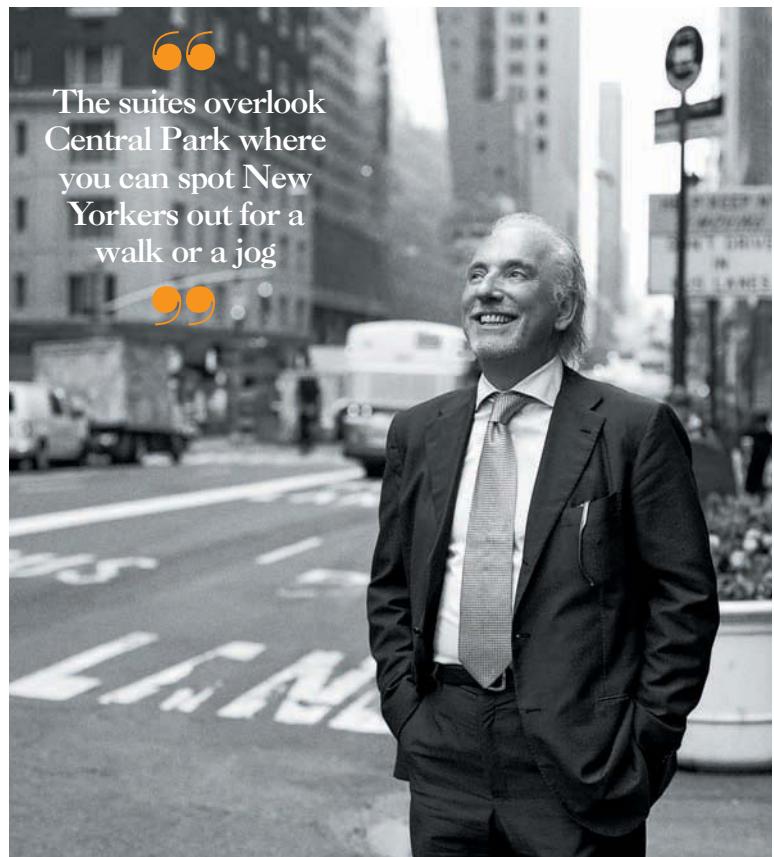
➲ The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park

"Housed in a historic building, what impresses me most about this hotel is the super professional service, guaranteeing a good stay. This is the best hotel in the Central Park area, well placed for shopping. The suites overlook the park where you can spot New Yorkers out for a walk or a jog."

Doubles from AED 2,550; 001-212-308 9100; ritzcarlton.com



NEW YORK



INTERVIEW: JENNY KING

➲ Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok

"One of the oldest hotels in Bangkok, this is where pretty much every important person visiting the city has stayed at least once, so it has many stories to tell. The Sala Rim Naam restaurant has the best Thai buffet I have ever tried and The Oriental Spa, which you reach by a short boat ride, is very romantic."

Doubles from AED 1,595; 0066-2-659 9000, mandarinoriental.com/bangkok



BANGKOK

➲ Grand Hyatt Shanghai

"This impressive hotel has the best views over the river in Shanghai, and blends Art Deco décor with contemporary furniture. The rooms are paradise for business travellers with comfortable and well-equipped desks stocked with useful devices, and the Wi-Fi connection never fails."

Doubles from AED 940; 0086-21-5049 1234, shanghai.grand.hyatt.com



SHANGHAI

➲ NO THANKS

"Some hotels put the best rooms on the upper floors, which I don't like as I don't feel comfortable being so high up."

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Comprising two iconic towers, the JW Marriott Marquis Dubai stands elevated above Dubai's Business Bay on Sheikh Zayed Road, in the heart of one of the most desirable locations in the city, offering a spectrum of facilities for the most discerning travelers.

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14 AWARD-WINNING RESTAURANTS, BARS AND LOUNGES

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JW MARRIOTT.
MARQUIS
DUBAI



Hanoi

Five top hotels, from the thrifty-but-nifty to the downright

Fringe benefits

Though a little removed from the town centre, the **contemporary architecture** and impeccable service at the **JW Marriott Hanoi** have put it on visitors' radar since the **opening in December 2013**. Some of the 395 rooms have **lake views**, and the six on-site restaurants include **authentic Cantonese** and classic French.

Extensive business facilities – plus its location by the convention centre – cater to an **executive clientele**.

marriott.com



MODERN



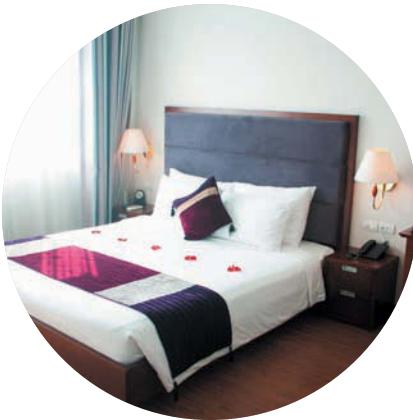
LUXURY

	INTERCONTINENTAL HANOI WESTLAKE	SOFITEL LEGEND METROPOLE HOTEL HANOI
Location	In the Tay Ho suburb, stretching along the east shore of the West Lake. It's a bit of a drive from the main sights but has excellent food nearby . Try Highway4 for dinner and The House of Son Tinh for cocktails	In the heart of the French Quarter 's grid of elegant, tree-lined boulevards, the Metropole is also within walking distance of the narrow lanes of the Old Quarter, with its craft shops, central market and simple restaurants
Décor	The hotel occupies a string of low-rise buildings; some overhang the water. There are plenty of Vietnamese touches, from contemporary art in the lobby to rustic wooden ladders as towel rails	Plush 1901 colonial-grand. Sofitel created a new luxury label, Legend, when it converted the old whitewashed hotel. The Opera Wing matches the original hotel on the outside
Clientele	New Yorkers, Europeans and Chinese businessmen are regulars	From Brangelina to Charlie Chaplin and Michael Caine filming <i>The Quiet American</i> . Now also Hanoi's Bentley-driving, Hermès-toting in-crowd
Rooms	All 318 rooms are airy and bright , with plain fabrics, dark wood and white walls. Rooms in the three waterside pavilions have some of the best views of the lake	109 in the old wing, 255 in the new. Even the smallest is bright and spacious. Polished-wood floors and ceiling fans give the old-wing rooms a retro feel
Food & Drink	The Sunset Bar , reached via a walkway over the water, is brilliant by day or night	Classic French (fresh foie gras, lobster bisque) in Le Beaulieu, and world-class cocktails (stirred, not shaken) in the Bamboo Bar. Ms Jolie lent her name to Angelina's, the Italian restaurant
Strengths	Rooms over the lake are among the most romantic in the city – and quiet, too	The staff. This is a grand, historic hotel that is neither formal nor snooty
Weaknesses	The rooms on the ground floor are a bit too noisy	The pool is quite small for a hotel of its size
Wi-Fi	AED 18 per day	Free
Price	Doubles from AED 400	Doubles from AED 1,140
Contact	1A Nghi Tam; 0084-5-6270 8888; ihg.com	15 Ngo Quyen Street; 0084-4-3826 6919; sofitel.com

fabulous, in Vietnam's effervescent capital



DESIGN



GOOD VALUE



BUSINESS

HOTEL DE L'OPERA

The ground-floor Bentley boutique announces that this is the heart of uptown, on what is **the Fifth Avenue of Hanoi**. It's also just a short walk from the Hoàn Kiem Lake and the Old Quarter

Part of Accor's MGallery, a collection of hotels with personality, this one is modern and bold, especially in its high ceilings, **picture windows and splashes of bright colour**

Well-heeled Australians and Asian businessmen alongside **younger creatives**



The 107 rooms have a lot of colour and texture - mosaic tiles in the bathrooms, velvet headboards, **a pink throw on the bed**

Duck with ginger and noodles in the more formal but less atmospheric Satine restaurant; **white-fish carpaccio with seaweed** in Café Lautrec

Fabulous big beds and keen pricing

Lower-floor rooms overlooking the street **can be noisy**

Free

Doubles from **AED 680**

29 Trang Tien; 0084-4-6282 5555,
hoteldelopera.com

ESSENCE HANOI HOTEL & SPA

In the heart of the Old Quarter, **a few steps from Dong Xuan market** and some of the city's best street life and shopping (silks, crafts, food - including excellent dried fruits)

Part of a chain that has flourished by providing well-designed, well-run, mid-range hotels. Public and private spaces all follow the same theme - **white walls, muted fabrics, dark wood**

Mostly Australian and **European independent travellers** wanting a good-value Old Quarter hotel but no longer interested in backpacking

All 30 rooms have **complimentary-use laptops** and free Wi-Fi; the upper floors are brightest and quietest



Essence Café has booth seating and serves as a breakfast room, bar and simple but reliable Vietnamese restaurant with an **excellent pho** (noodle soup)

A **good standard** of room - and service - in the chaotic Old Quarter

The streets around the hotel can be **very lively at night** - some might feel bothered by that

Free

Doubles from **AED 185**

22 Ta Hien St; 0084-4-3935 2485,
essencehanoihotel.com

HILTON HANOI OPERA

Not to be confused with the Hanoi Hilton (the Hoa Lo prison), the Hilton Hanoi is in the business district, **beside the Opera House** and within walking distance of the best restaurants

Matching the **neoclassical grandeur** of the Opera House, the Hilton is a convincing Nineties take on an imposing 1890s building, with massive columns and a tall mansard roof

Until the Metropole reopened in 2010, the Hilton was regularly voted as the city's best hotel, and it has retained some of its loyal following, especially among **East-meets-West business people** and American travellers

The 268 rooms are **big enough but can feel anonymous**, though the odd dash of red brightens things up

Vietnamese specialities at the conservatory-style Ba Mien restaurant, and a popular happy hour beneath the giant plasma screens at JJ's sports bar

Rates are **extremely reasonable** given the location and standard of service

Charges for Wi-Fi (surely everyone knows by now that water and Wi-Fi must be free)

AED 55 per day

Doubles from **AED 385**

1 Le Thanh Tong Street; 0084-4-3933 0500,
hilton.com

The debate



“Does capturing a moment prevent you from savouring it?”



Yes
MARKUS THESLEFF
Founder, Whistle Hospitality

“Travel is a large part of my life, but I rarely take photos because I want to enjoy the moment – personal memories mean more to me than a snapshot. Unless you’re a professional photographer, you risk spending time trying to capture the perfect photo and, in the process, forget to live in the moment. Life is a journey, a sum of our experiences, which help define who we are, and nothing can ever measure up to living these experiences fully – which we can’t do while trying to capture a selfie. I just returned from the Super Bowl in Phoenix, which was a truly fantastic experience. Like many others, I was offered crazy amounts of cash to sell my ticket. Since I’m not a die-hard fan of either team, almost everyone suggested I sell it – but I’m very happy I didn’t as I was able to witness history in the making. As the founder of a boutique hospitality company, I’m in the business of creating experiences that people can enjoy and savour, rather than missing out by viewing them from behind a lens so that they can show off about their exploits.”



No
ZEINA EL-DANA
Founder & managing director, Z7 Communications

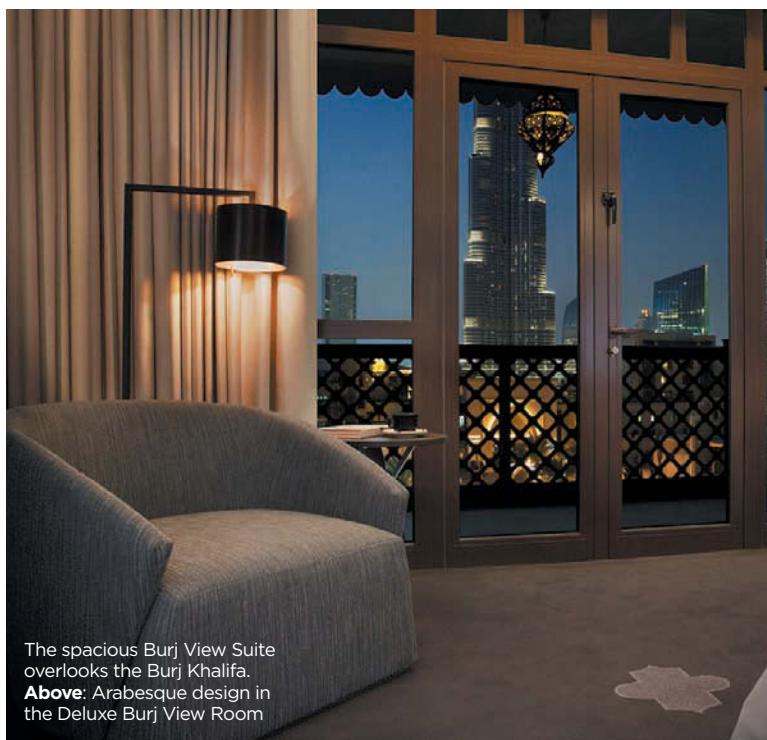
“Some say that the act of taking a photo means you fail to enjoy the actual moment. So concerned are we about lighting, flash and picture composition that perhaps the view, ambience and beauty passes us by. I don’t agree with this and neither does my Instagram account. I love taking photos of my travels – the sunrise over the horizon; the exotic foods I sample; the fashion shows I attend in Milan, London, New York and Paris; the falling snow while skiing... I could go on. More than taking these pictures, I love looking at them afterwards, reliving the memories and remembering the people I shared them with. I have my iPhone around in most social situations

– without this quick snap, which takes all of two seconds, there would be no images to pore over later or details to share. It doesn’t mean I valued the moment any less. My work in the luxury industry and public relations has taught me that it’s the details that matter most and we need to hold on to and treasure these details. So I say, click away.”



Arabesque LUXURY

A newcomer in the heart of the city, Manzil Downtown Dubai is a chic boutique retreat



The spacious Burj View Suite overlooks the Burj Khalifa.

Above: Arabesque design in the Deluxe Burj View Room

Against a backdrop of the world's tallest building, luxury and style come together at Manzil Downtown Dubai where Arabian heritage meets modernity.

Within easy access of the most important business districts and steps away from The Dubai Mall, the hotel - managed by Vida Hotels & Resorts - attracts global business and leisure travellers. Traditional arches and Persian carpets welcome you into the hotel while the helpful staff exude warmth. The 197 spacious rooms in a warm and inviting palette of brown, beige and white come with ornate lampshades, deep-soaking tubs and separate showers, plus mod cons such as a revolving 42in flat-screen TV. The Burj View Suites provide even more indulgence with a private balcony and separate living area alongside a lavish bathroom. The signature restaurant Boulevard Kitchen serves Levantine fare for breakfast, lunch and dinner. At the centre of the property, The Courtyard offers Middle Eastern cuisine and a range of shisha flavours in an al fresco setting, while Nezesaussi is the hotel's steakhouse-cum-sports bar. For the business traveller, there are four meeting rooms, a boardroom and a 24-hour business centre to ensure clients' needs are always met, while leisure travellers can take advantage of the shuttle bus service to the beach and malls or spend their days relaxing at the outdoor, temperature-controlled pool.

For more information call 00971-4-428 5888 or visit vida-hotels.com/en/manzil

Colourful fabrics drying
on the banks of the River
Ganges in Varanasi

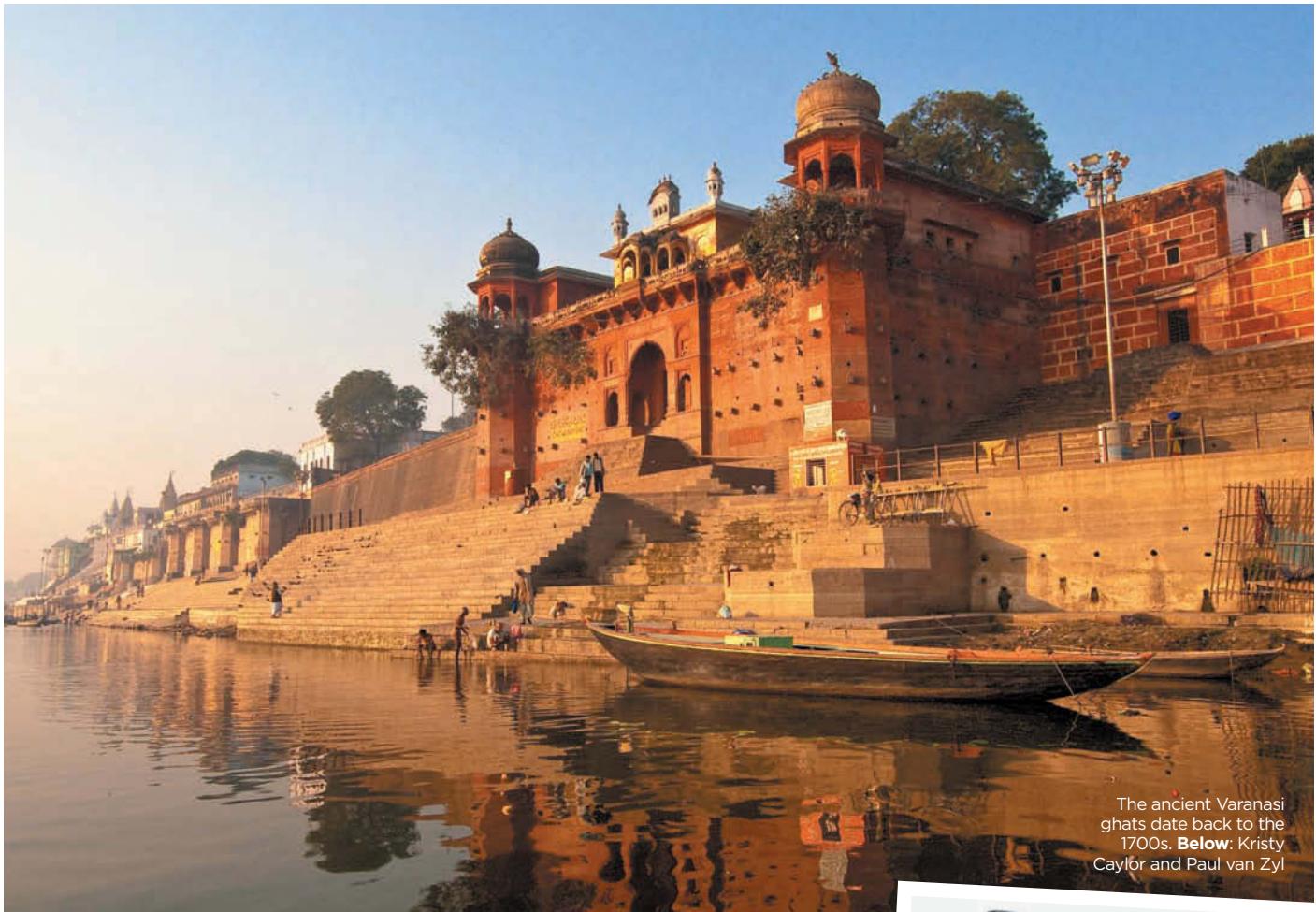


Travel in style

SUSTAINABLE FASHION ■ STYLE GUIDE ■ HOW TO PACK

FASHION FORWARD

While most creative people travel for inspiration, few truly repay the debt to their foreign muses. The following innovative designers, whether by supporting disenfranchised artisans or employing sustainable grazing practices, are teaching the rest of the industry how to walk the walk. Proof that good style and doing good are no longer mutually exclusive



The ancient Varanasi ghats date back to the 1700s. **Below:** Kristy Caylor and Paul van Zyl

Maiyet

Because they know that behind every great dress is a great artisan

In 2010, when Maiyet co-founders Paul van Zyl and Kristy Caylor set off on their first exploratory 20-city trip around the world, an early stop was Varanasi, India, to visit the silk weavers for which the city, one of the oldest on earth, is renowned. "I remember Kristy admiring the silks and the complex way they're made," says CEO Van Zyl. "The experience encapsulated everything we hoped to do with Maiyet – create rare, beautiful and covetable products, but also enable artisans to collaborate more productively." Now the company has joined forces with Nest, a non-profit organisation that offers support to artisans in several countries, to finance a David Adjaye-designed silk-weaving facility opening this year in Varanasi.



The new space will allow up to 100 craftsmen to work together in safe conditions and to grow their own textile businesses. "We wanted to give them a chance to help themselves," Van Zyl explains.

This hands-on approach is at the centre of Maiyet's mission. In Varanasi, creative director Caylor found inspiration in both the place and the crafts produced there. In recent years, Indian saris have been made using a distinctive jacquard weaving method, and last autumn some of Maiyet's own polka-dot silk dresses incorporated the same technique. Van Zyl and Caylor's collaborations don't stop in India, however; they're currently working with Kenyan artists to create brass jewellery and with Indonesian textile-makers on experimental batiks. "One of the things our travels have taught us is that any craft demands a skill set, pride and dignity from its practitioner," says Van Zyl. "To be able to connect with these artisans and then bring their work to a Paris Fashion Week runway and to customers in London, Miami and Tokyo – it's at the core of what we do."



India's colourful saris inspired Maiyet's co-founders to set up a silk-weaving factory in Varanasi for local craftsmen

Stella McCartney

Because she took cruelty-free fashion from frumpy to fabulous

It's little wonder that McCartney, a lifelong vegetarian who was raised on an organic farm in the English countryside, has had a heightened eco-consciousness from an early age. "Nature is part of my roots," she says. "The environment has always been important to me." Since the launch of her line in 2001, the British designer has been a maverick for fashion that's at once ethical and luxurious, and stubborn in her refusal to use fur or leather in her collections. That same sense of conviction brought her to Argentina, where she partnered with the Nature Conservancy and Ovis 21, a network of more than 140 farmers across Argentina, Chile and Uruguay who have banded together to reverse the devastating effects of 100 years of continuous grazing in the Patagonia grasslands



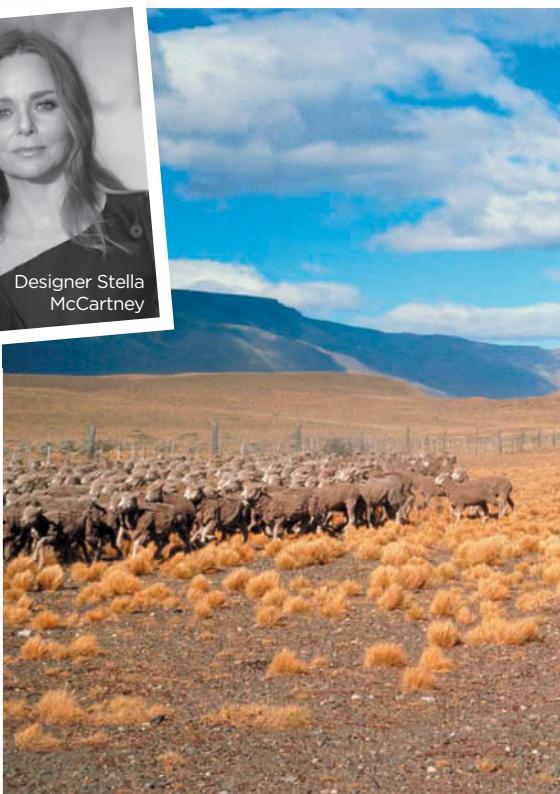
by adhering to a multi-pasture protocol that replicates natural grazing patterns. Argentina is the world's fifth-largest producer of wool and McCartney sourced much of the material for her autumn/winter '14 collection (including oversized fringed woollen blanket coats) from Patagonian farmers who participate in Ovis 21's programme.

This isn't the first time travel has played a vital role in McCartney's designs: Her clothes are rich with visual references from different destinations. In 2013, she also collaborated with the International Trade Centre, a Geneva-based agency that has helped match luxury labels with artisans across Africa, to create printed totes made in Nairobi. "It's important to encourage industry in small communities," she says. "The luxury goods market has a long way to go, but we should all be taking steps toward sustainability."

McCartney sourced the wool for her A/W '14 collection from Patagonian farmers dedicated to protecting the grasslands.
Above right: Sheep in Argentinian Patagonia



Designer Stella McCartney



BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

Make a statement on your next city break with eye-catching acid-yellow travel accessories that take style to new heights



1 Prismo Hardside Suitcase,
AED 599, **American Tourister**

2 Neon Yellow Leather Big
Skeleton Tote Bag, AED 5,980,
Philipp Plein

3 In Flight Neon Patent
Leather-Trimmed Travel Case,
AED 757, **Anya Hindmarch** at
net-a-porter.com

4 Le Pliage Héritage Handbag,
AED 4,150, **Longchamp**

5 Classic Monogram Clutch,
AED 4,950, **Saint Laurent by
Hedi Slimane**

6 Alma PM Épi leather bag,
AED 6,000, **Louis Vuitton**

7 Mini Saffiano Chain Phone Bag,
AED 2,394, **Dolce & Gabbana**



4



5



6



7



ARM CANDY

Forget the standard black, brown and steel. Instead, add a playful touch to your wardrobe with fashion watches sporting bright straps that are perfectly suited to spring



WALK THIS WAY

Stay comfortable on the go with these playful espadrilles that will put a spring in your step



Neo espadrilles,
AED 3,150, **Tod's** at
net-a-porter.com

Ankle-strap
espadrilles,
AED 2,250,
Emilio Pucci at
Harvey Nichols

Lucia
espadrilles,
AED 1,050,
Tory Burch



WORDS: RHEA SARAN; STYLE: SABINA PARKINSON; PHOTO: AURSA OSIPAVICIUTE

Leather
espadrilles,
AED 830,
Longchamp

Leather espadrilles,
AED 1,495, **Loewe**

Canvas
and leather
espadrilles,
AED 1,800,
Fendi



Park Deluxe King rooms come with a balcony overlooking the Indian Ocean



Mambo Msige is a building steeped in history, dating back to the 17th century

Cultural HAVEN

Experience the culture, heritage and history of this East African island at Park Hyatt Zanzibar

Park Hyatt Zanzibar is the quintessential destination to experience the idyllic East African island of Zanzibar and embrace the rich culture, heritage and historical significance of the hotel's location. Sitting majestically on the beachfront in the heart of Stone Town, a designated UNESCO heritage site, Park Hyatt Zanzibar provides the ultimate haven amongst Stone Town's labyrinth of winding alleys, bustling markets, mosques and famed Zanzibari doors, featuring magnificent ornate wooden carvings. The town's key attractions are easily accessible by foot including Forodhani Gardens, the Old Fort, the Old Dispensary, the Peace Memorial Museum, the Palace Museum and the House of Wonders. The hotel is housed in two buildings, one of them Mambo Msige, a building steeped in history, grace and mystique with a story dating back to the 17th century. A typical Zanzibari mansion, centred round a peaceful courtyard, a retreat from the summer heat, Mambo Msige is a unique gem with architecture that embraces Swahili culture alongside Arab, Persian, Indian and European elements. The new and purpose-built Zamani residence connects to Mambo Msige, blending old with new, historic with contemporary. From the spacious, elegant guest rooms, authentic cuisine and spectacular views to the oceanfront infinity pool, Anantara Spa, fully-equipped fitness centre and exceptional meeting, event and private function facilities, Park Hyatt Zanzibar offers both discerning business travellers and luxury holiday-makers rare, intimate and unforgettable experiences.

For more information, call 00255-24-550 1234 or visit zanzibar.park.hyatt.com



Above:
The mansion-style architecture of the hotel.
Left: The beachfront infinity pool comes with ocean views

ARABIAN NIGHTS

Owner of Bambah Boutique **Maha Abdul Rasheed** on packing for a trip to her hometown, Cairo



An eclectic wardrobe in rich tones captures the spirit of Cairo's atmospheric souks, with their medley of stores and incredible range of offerings. Abdul Rasheed is not one to follow the herd, mixing bold statement prints and textures with unique vintage pieces and pulling it all together. As fashion designer behind the labels Vintage Reconstructed and Bambah, she loves boutique-hopping at Turath and Balady in the Zamalek neighbourhood for inspiration and exploring the narrow alleys of the Khan el-Khalili Egyptian bazaar, where she picks up one-off accessories and handmade crafts. Distressed vintage Levi's and a polka-dot balloon top, with a mirrored ethnic-style jacket thrown over – plus, comfy loafers – take Abdul Rasheed's look from a day of sourcing to a pit stop for fresh mango juice at Al Fishawy followed by a serene felluca trip down the Nile. Swap the jeans for a retro print skirt, add a swipe of bright lipstick and she's ready for sundowners at the Sequoia lounge on the Nile, with one of the best views in Cairo.

WORDS: JENNY KING; PHOTO: EFRAIM EVIDOR



HOT TIPS

Fold delicate clothing inside out to avoid snags and add a scented fabric conditioner sheet to your case to make everything smell good

Condé Nast Traveller

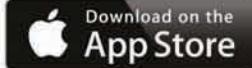
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LIFE AQUATIC

A new Mediterranean-inspired fragrance is a vacation for the senses

Imagine you're on a sleek white yacht drifting along on gentle waves, a warm, salty breeze giving your hair that perfect amount of wind-blown nonchalance as you look out at the expanse of sea, the sun playing across the water's surface so that it shifts from azure to turquoise to aquamarine as the light changes with the moving surf. Now imagine bottling that moment and you have Elie Saab's new fragrance, the limited-edition Le Parfum Resort Collection 2015, inspired by the sun-dappled waters off the Amalfi Coast, which was also the catalyst for the spring/summer '15 collection. The fruity, floral scent has decidedly Mediterranean top notes of fig and orange blossom along with the more exotic jasmine and frangipani, and comes in a blue-tinged bottle with a hint of gold that evokes the way sunlight plays on translucent surfaces. All it takes is a quick spray and you're on that boat again.



CNT
Classic

Elie Saab Le Parfum
Resort Collection
2015, from AED 340



LIP SERVICE

Keep your lips hydrated and pucker-worthy even when you're 30,000 feet in the air

1

La Prairie Anti-Aging Eye & Lip Perfection à Porter, AED 730

3

REN Vita Mineral Lip Balm, AED 82

2

Chanel Hydra Beauty Nourishing Lip Care, AED 200

4

Dior Addict Lip Glow Colour Reviver Balm, AED 166

5

Bobbi Brown Lip Balm, AED 120

6

Shiseido Benefiance Full Correction Lip Treatment, AED 198



7
YSL Top Secrets
Re-plumping
Concentrate,
AED 203



9
Kiehl's Lip Balm,
AED 60



10
Clarins Daily
Energiser Lovely
Lip Balm, AED 75



11
Laura Mercier Lip
Balm, AED 104



12
La Mer
The Lip Balm,
AED 330

Traveller Promotion



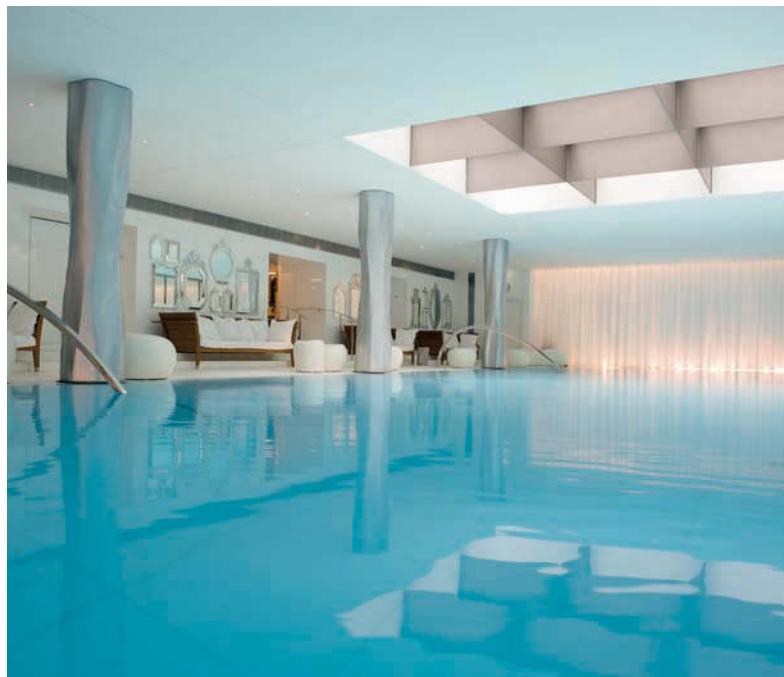
The sophisticated
Presidential Katara Suite.
Below: The pool at the hotel's
Spa My Blend by Clarins

Suite DREAMS

The exclusive Privé suites at Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris are the epitome of Parisian elegance

Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris expresses the essence of the French capital: style, elegance and *art de vivre*. Experience luxurious suites designed by Philippe Starck in the most glamorous and artistic Parisian palace, giving guests the privacy of an exclusive residence. Each suite is a sublime, uplifting space, blending original architectural features with contemporary design, individual character and supreme comfort. Every suite has a kitchen where the hotel's Michelin-star chefs will interpret privately the culinary desires of every guest, to create unforgettable gourmet experiences. Guests also have direct access to an in-suite private gym, the hotel's idyllic Spa My Blend by Clarins as well as the city's longest pool. Get an insider's take on the Parisian art scene with tips from the hotel's Art Concierge. For multi-generational travel, shopping sprees or romantic interludes, Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris offers an unforgettable emotional luxury.

For more information, call 0033-1-42-99 8800 or visit leroyalmonceau.com



Jet-set glow

Award-winning make-up artist and blogger **Huda Kattan** on how to keep your look fresh while on the road

A Hollywood-trained make-up artist and influential beauty blogger (at hudabeauty.com), in 2013 Kattan launched her Huda Beauty line with a range of false eyelashes, followed by nails, at Sephora. Travelling regularly for work, she's mastered the art of looking flawless from sunrise to sunset. She shares some tips with CNT.

How can we keep our make-up low maintenance when travelling?

Go for a natural look and use only basics. It's important to use a great concealer as this will help cover up jet-lagged skin. I also suggest getting eyelash extensions - you'll look great from the time you wake up till you go to bed. Before you travel you should also get your brows perfected, which will help you look and feel natural, fresh and beautiful.

What are some great long-lasting products?

I am obsessed with Gucci Luminous Perfecting Concealer - it's so easy to apply and covers imperfections on the move. To give my skin a glow I use Soleil Tan de Chanel bronzer, and then I apply Dior Diorshow Iconic Overcurl mascara to brighten up my eyes as a finishing touch.

Can you recommend any versatile products to save on suitcase space?

I swear by Vaseline, which can be used for lips, lashes and dry skin. If you have a really good mascara you can also use it as a gel liner. Finally, I never go anywhere without a small bottle of hairspray, which can also keep eyebrows in place.

What make-up products are OK to use in-flight?

I wear make-up when travelling when I'm getting off a flight and heading straight to a meeting. I love BB creams like Benefit Big Easy and Guerlain Lingerie De Peau BB Cream SPF 30 - they keep your skin



'I love BB creams – they keep your skin moisturised, even and looking fresh'

moisturised, even and looking fresh. You will also need a great mascara, and never forget your brows: I love MAC Eye Brows eye pencil in Lingering - it looks great on anyone.

Is SPF make-up as effective as regular sunscreen?

No, absolutely not. You need to reapply anything with sunscreen in it throughout the day and you don't usually do this with make-up.

Is it best to use waterproof formulas when travelling?

I don't recommend them as they can be difficult to remove, which is not ideal when you're travelling and tired. They also don't let your skin or lashes breathe.



MAC Eye Brows
in Lingering,
AED 97

How should we store make-up in hot climates?

I always keep my room really cold to protect my make-up and never leave it in the sun. Alternatively, you can keep things in the fridge - I definitely suggest keeping lipsticks and eyeliners in there.

Which one item should we pack to take the look from beach to bar?

No matter where you are, a cat-eye liner and a set of

Huda Beauty Lashes will take you from day to night - and they take up no room in your suitcase.

What make-up essentials do you always pack?

Smith's Rosebud Salve is great because it keeps your lips soft and can double as a brow groomer. Kiehl's Ultra Facial Tinted Moisturizer SPF 15 adds a hint of colour and keeps skin nourished. MAC Mineralize Satin Finish SPF 15 Foundation is the best way to get flawless skin in minutes (but as it has a powder finish, make sure you moisturise well before you apply it). Revlon Colorstay Eye Liner is a great pencil because you don't need a sharpener and the staying power is incredible - I keep this in my bag at all times. [CNT](#)



Hidden paris

CLASSIC PARIS WILL ALWAYS HAVE ITS CHARMs,
BUT LATELY IN-THE-KNOW PARISIANS AND SAVVY
VISITORS ARE VENTURING FURTHER AFIELD
TO THE OUTER SUBURBS OFF THE BOULEVARD
PÉRIPHÉRIQUE, WHERE EXCITING NEW
CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS, CREATIVE SPACES
AND FUNKY RESTAURANTS ARE SHIFTING
THE CITY'S CENTRE OF GRAVITY

Written by **RICHARD MELLOR**

Photographed by **ANTOINE AND CHARLIE**

Styled by **JULIEN SCHMITT**

Grande Halle de la Villette,
a cultural centre that hosts
exhibitions and music festivals,
as seen from the terrace of
Café des Concerts in the 19th

Dress, bag; both by **Dior**

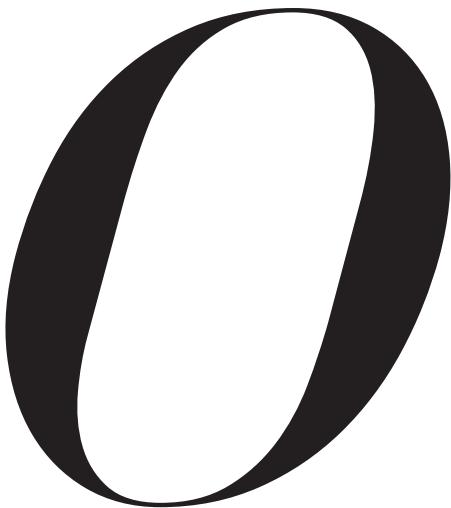
MODEL: SMITA LASRADO; MAKE-UP: NATSUKI ONEYAMA; HAIR: YOANN FERNANDEZ USING KEVIN MURPHY PRODUCTS;
STYLISTS ASSISTANT: AESANE PECNARD; PRODUCER: SARA NOËL AT APOLLINE; PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: MATTHIEU CABOURRET





Strolling through the
Jardin de Bambou, one of
several themed gardens
at Parc de la Villette

Coat, belt; both by Céline.
Shoes by Pierre Hardy.
Earrings by Stone



ONCE UPON A TIME, SPORTS FANS WERE THE only tourists who'd cross the Boulevard Périphérique. To watch Longchamp's horse riding or grand-slam tennis at Roland Garros, visitors to western Paris had to traverse the city's ring road, whose route loosely follows the old city walls and whose circular boundary incubates Paris' 20 inner arrondissements from the grittier *banlieues* (suburbs) outside. Until recently, most other travellers stayed central, sticking to the areas around the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame or Montmartre. Perhaps a few, lost while looking for Jim Morrison's grave, might inadvertently have reached the far eastern fringes of Père Lachaise cemetery and thus been only half a kilometre from the Périphérique. But almost none deliberately ventured so far out. Why bother?

North of the sports stadia, in the gigantic Bois de Boulogne park and just outside the Périphérique, lies one of modern Paris' many retorts to that question. Open since October, the **Fondation Louis Vuitton** (0033-1-440-69 9600, fondationlouisvuitton.fr) is both art gallery and architectural tour de force. Designed by Canadian wizard Frank Gehry, the extravagant 46m-high building blends timber, steel and concrete while centring around 12 twisting, all-glass sails whose translucent panels refract dappled colours as the day progresses. Its impact reminiscent of the arrival of the Louvre's courtyard pyramid 26 years ago, the city's latest architectural spectacular has been likened to a crystal palace, a spaceship, a magnificent whale and, most commonly and obviously, a boat. Gehry has revealed that his designs were inspired by the surrounding parkland's early history. Upon its creation in 1860, the 845-hectare Bois de Boulogne was solely the highbrow preserve of elite Parisians, thanks in part to grand Second Empire buildings and the arrival of Longchamp. In modern times, however, it had become rather dull, considered simply a family-friendly recreation space. Fondation Louis Vuitton's arrival has happily restored an air of grandeur, relevance and cultural pizzazz to the Bois.

Next month, though, the feature making waves will be on the Fondation's inside.

Opening on April 1, debut exhibition *Les Clefs d'une Passion* (The Keys of a Passion) is borrowing a palpitation-inducing array of masterpieces from institutions like the MoMA and St Petersburg's State Hermitage Museum. Confirmed as coming at press time were Edvard Munch's "The Scream", Henri Matisse's "Dance" and Mark Rothko's "No. 46 (Black, Ocher, Red Over Red)"; rumoured to be joining them are Constantin Brancusi's "Endless Column, Version 1" sculpture and Pablo Picasso's "Woman With Yellow Hair". One thing's for sure: running until July 6, this most A-list of exhibitions confirms the Fondation as a world-leading 20th-century art resource.

Similar pizzazz is found up in north-eastern Paris, where the city's new principal concert hall opened in mid-January, just after the capital suffered its tragic terrorist attack. The much-delayed **Philharmonie de Paris** (0033-1-4484 4484, philharmoniedeparis.fr) ran up a final bill of €90 million (AED 1.6 billion): a dizzying, triple-the-original-estimate figure rendered far more explicable once you witness the exterior of Jean Nouvel's creation. The visual feast appears, to the layman, to be created out of a chaotic series of vast aluminium slabs, stacked helter-skelter and covered in 340,000 metallic birds. As one crowning vertical block reaches skywards, so another – on to which listings are projected – juts out over the adjacent Périphérique. The 2,400-seat auditorium inside is equally attention-grabbing, with gigantic floating clouds, ribbon-like balcony sweeps, moveable seating and stage configurations all enabling a spectacular new typology of acoustics; a startling clarity of sound rarely, if ever, achieved before.

Setting up home inside the 19th arrondissement's Parc de la Villette, far

from *centre-ville*, emphasises one of the Philharmonie's boldest aims: to democratise classical music by enticing a younger, cooler crowd – the sort of Parisians regularly encountered in this creative corner – alongside the usual Bach and Beethoven diehards. Reasonably priced tickets and numerous outreach projects epitomise this intention, as does the hosting of modern opera and pop concerts in amongst the symphonies. Divine Comedy played last month and Chilly Gonzales is scheduled for the end of the month.

The same challenge, to cease what Nouvel himself labels as the eternal ostracism of the *banlieues*, is part of a wider scheme to decentralise the city – a desire only heightened by those January attacks – and heal the perceived divide between central Paris and its surrounding Petite Couronne (Little Crown). The €15 billion (AED 62.3 billion) plan, Métropole du Grand Paris, nicknamed Grand Paris and first floated by President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007, is due for completion in 2016 and will incorporate a new Métro extension with iconic stations designed by lauded architecture firms, plus the Vallée de la Culture, a project to transform the western loop of the Seine between Issy-les-Moulineaux and Nanterre into an irresistible new destination for aesthetes.

Central to that particular plan is **R4** (r4-ileseguin.com). On the Île Seguin, vast Renault plants abandoned by the car giant in 1992 are making way for a daring new micro-city concept. The eight-floor R4, once again designed by the Pritzker Prize-winning Nouvel, will be its focal point. With work not due for completion until the end of 2017, details about R4 are still sketchy, but an exhibition hall, artists' studios, performance venue, auction house and art galleries are ▶



Bernard Tschumi's red follies, 35 of which are scattered through Parc de la Villette, perched along the Canal de l'Ourcq

all apparently in the pipeline, while render images project a jaw-dropping structure paying homage to the island's industrial past.

For now, though, the Philharmonie's arrival has confirmed Parc de la Villette as Paris' undisputed cultural hub. Occupying the site of a former abattoir, the 35-hectare park combines vast swathes of greenery and gentle Canal de l'Oureq cruises with statement attractions like the Philharmonie's Musée de la Musique, home to various valuable musical instruments, exhibition centres and premium concert venues like **Le Zénith** (0033-1-4452 5456, zenith-paris.com), to whose stage Maroon 5, Nickelback and Simply Red will all take later this year. There's also the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie where, despite being the site of a planetarium and a nuclear submarine, the headline act is steel globe **La Géode** (0033-1-4005 7999, lageode.fr), inside which the IMAX cinema boasts both a whopping 1,000sqm hemispherical screen and a projector nine times larger than that of most cinemas; it exceeds, in fact, humans' maximum field of vision.

Very much in most tourists' field of vision, meanwhile, is **La Flèche d'Or** (0033-1-4464 0102, flechedor.fr), a trendy, dance-focused

music club occupying the elegant old Gare de Charonne. A very similar scenario is true up in northern Paris, where Gare Ornano turned, last July, into hip **La REcyclerie** (0033-1-4257 5849, larecyclerie.com): a cocktail bar, organic restaurant, workshop space and urban farm rolled into one. Both of these grand former stations were once part of the Petite Ceinture (or Little Belt), an orbital railway just inside the Périphérique; both had lain derelict since 1934, when trains ceased operation.

So, too, had Saint-Ouen, one station west of Ornano and now due to become **Le Hasard Ludique** (0033-9-8198 6755, lehasardludique.paris), or Random Fun, in autumn. Random is the word: this newest arrival is pledging to host an arty hotchpotch of gigs, gallery shows, performance pieces and classes, along with a bistro and English-style pub. It all speaks to a clubhouse feel, and the expectation is that anyone fond of Canal St Martin hangout Le Comptoir General will feel just as content at Le Hasard Ludique.

Beyond these repurposed stations, most of the Petite Ceinture is now derelict and thickly overgrown, frequented only by foxes, graffiti daubers and urban explorers seeking access points to Paris' fabled catacombs. Some

stretches, though, have opened to joggers and strollers; the best is at the bottom of the Left Bank's 15th arrondissement, between rue Olivier-de-Serres (entry by rue Lefebvre) and Place Balard and accessed via stairs or lifts. Mostly elevated above road level and 1.3km in length, the section incorporates tennis clubs, Eiffel Tower views and no end of vegetation and street art. It's a peaceful, plaintive route which, as it lazily sashays between new-builds and classic-stone blocks, encourages contemplation of Paris' changing face.

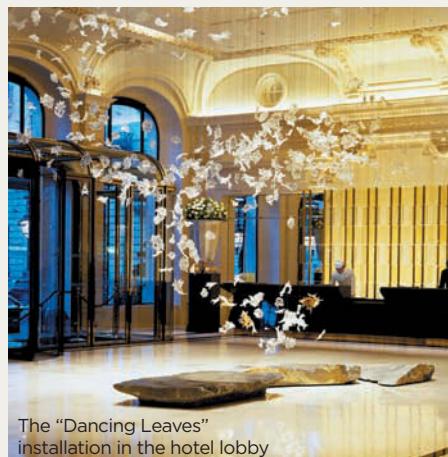
Rambling along the Petite Ceinture doesn't require crossing the Périphérique, but further out in the south-west and across the river, frequenting one of Paris' most glamorous new venues certainly does. Boulogne-Billancourt is a business centre and the French capital's wealthiest suburb, explaining why the team behind Le Perchoir – two hip rooftop bars in central Paris – opened **La Passerelle** (0033-1-4620 4944, lapasserelle-boulogne.fr) on its distant stretch of the Seine last summer. This floating, tropical-style bar and restaurant barge is intended, according to co-founder Olivier Talon, as "a travel experience for holidaying Parisians". It certainly has a vacation feel with well-dressed, wealthy bourgeoisie sipping ▶

WHERE TO STAY

THE PENINSULA PARIS

One of the city's newest properties is also one of its most elegant, says Rhea Saram

Set ideally almost equidistant from soft-traversed central Paris and some of the up-and-coming *banlieues* around the Périphérique – the Bois de Boulogne and Fondation Louis Vuitton are within easy access – The Peninsula Paris marks the debut of the Hong Kong-based hotel group in Europe. The property threw open its doors to guests last August after a four-year renovation of a Haussmann-era building that once housed the historic Hotel Majestic, where George Gershwin penned *An American In Paris* and Henry Kissinger signed away America's involvement in the Vietnam War. The impression on stepping into the lobby – separate from the hotel's main entrance on avenue Kléber, ensuring privacy for guests – is of an artful meeting of new and old: the contemporary "Dancing Leaves" art installation made from 800 hand-blown glass sycamore leaves hangs in a light-filled atrium trimmed with classical detailing. Richard Martinet, the architect who oversaw the renovation, says that



The "Dancing Leaves" installation in the hotel lobby

preserving history while moving into the future was one of the priorities: "You can make people dream with the past and that is a great thing to offer guests – but we are living in a different time and a luxury hotel is not a museum, it's a place for life." Martinet likens the restoration of The Peninsula Paris to taking an ancient manuscript that has parts missing and filling the blanks with a contemporary story. "We just have to make sure there are no contradictions," he says. The evidence of this philosophy – minus any contradictions – is everywhere. The gold-fringed Belle Époque Lobby restaurant has meticulously restored original elements and is where the traditional Peninsula High

Tea is served to live music; next door, Cantonese gastronomic delicacies are on the menu at LiLi, named after the Chinese opera singer whose face is printed on an optical-fibre net curtain backlit by LEDs at the entrance. The quiet omnipresence of cutting-edge tech continues in the guest rooms – refurbished in classic, understated hues; Parisian with a modern twist – where all the controls are operated from a touchscreen tablet, whether adjusting the lighting or looking up the room service menu. Even more 21st century, all calls – local or international – are free. In my room, there was an old-school valet box – for discrete laundry service and the delivery of the morning paper – as well as mod cons like a fingernail dryer embedded into the wall over the dressing table. With 34 suites, there's a variety of categories; on the top floor, the one-bedroom Katara Suite comes with a private terrace with an uninterrupted view over the city's most recognisable monuments. A similar vantage point is available from L'Oiseau Blanc, the rooftop, aviation-themed French "bistronomique" restaurant, where you can enjoy inventive cocktails and dishes like blue lobster alongside foie gras as the Eiffel Tower twinkles in the background.
Doubles from AED 3,330; 0033-1-5812 2888, paris.peninsula.com

The Peninsula Paris's gastronomic Cantonese restaurant Lili was named after a Chinese opera singer

Dress, shoes; both by **MaxMara**. Rings by **Repossi**





La REcyclerie serves unpretentious and healthy seasonal fare, which diners eat while seated at mismatched tables and chairs

Top by **Equipment**. Skirt, shoes, bag; all by **Chloé**. Rings by **Stone**. Earrings by **Repossi**

*In northern Paris,
Gare Ornano, once
part of the Petite
Ceinture, turned into
hip La RÉcyclerie:
a bar, organic
restaurant, workshop
space and urban farm
rolled into one*



Coat by Carven. Shoes by Pierre Hardy. Rings by Stone. Earrings by Repossi



The understated interiors of The Peninsula Paris.
Above: Jardin des Dunes et des Vents is open to kids at Parc de la Villette



tropical cocktails amid bamboo trees each night. Closed during winter, La Passerelle reopens for business in May.

Back beside the Bois de Boulogne, sunny vibes are also on offer at the **Molitor** (0033-1-5607 0850, [mltr.fr](#)). The original, Art Deco-style Piscine Molitor complex was first opened in 1929, by Olympic swimmer, and later *Tarzan* star, Johnny Weissmuller. Imported sand, a driving range and a winter ice rink quickly rendered it a magnet for beautiful Parisians, but by 1989 the Molitor had fallen on hard times and boarded up its windows. Happily it reopened last May, following a seven-year restoration, as a luxury hotel and members' club with that 46m swimming pool looking chicer than ever. Modern enhancements include an attractive roof terrace, a Clarins spa and a restaurant overseen by Michelin-star chef Yannick Alléno, formerly of Le Meurice.

A hundred yards away from the Molitor, cars whizz eternally along the Périphérique, inside a tunnel. While, increasingly, ever more tourists hurry across it. **CNT**

GETTING THERE

Qatar Airways ([qatarairways.com](#)) flies direct to Paris from Doha. For more, see p117

MY SECRET PARIS

As director of projects at Siny & Ooko, Stéphane Vatinel has spent 20 years transforming derelict buildings into voguish, multi-functional spaces – including La REcyclerie. Here, he reveals his favourite stop-offs

Many of my projects are located in outer arrondissements or banlieues around the Périphérique. There are many good places here, but you have to know they're there. For instance, Saint-Ouen's frenetic Les Puces flea market is an odd place to find a Philippe Starck-designed restaurant, but **Ma Cocotte** (0033-149-51 7000, [macocotte-lespuces.com](#)) has a warm environment and does excellent bistro classics. Get the lentil salad for lunch. Further north, **Le 6B** (0033-142-43 2334, [le6b.fr](#)) – a multi-disciplinary creative space using former offices in diverse Saint-Denis – is the new "place to be" for cultural types. One of my first projects was Glazart, a former bus station turned-music venue and club deep in the 19th. Now, every summer there's also

a pop-up outdoor beach, **La Plage de Glazart** (0033-140-36 5565, [glazart.com/laplage](#)), with deckchairs, DJs, cocktails, food trucks and Paris' best pétanque (boules). Just across the Périphérique is the trendy suburb of Pantin, where you'll find **La Menuiserie** (0033-148-40 5653, [lamenuiserie.org](#)), a bijou music hall plus bar-restaurant. Previously a carpenter's workshop, it's my favourite space to meet friends and to catch underground acts before everyone else. I always go to **Café des Concerts** (0033-142-49 7474, [cafedesconcerts.com](#)) for an apéro before seeing shows at the Zenith, Grande Halle de la Villette or the Philharmonie de Paris. It has a neo-bistro menu – divided into preludes, fermatas and finales – by ex-Royal Monceau chef Sébastien Prenot.



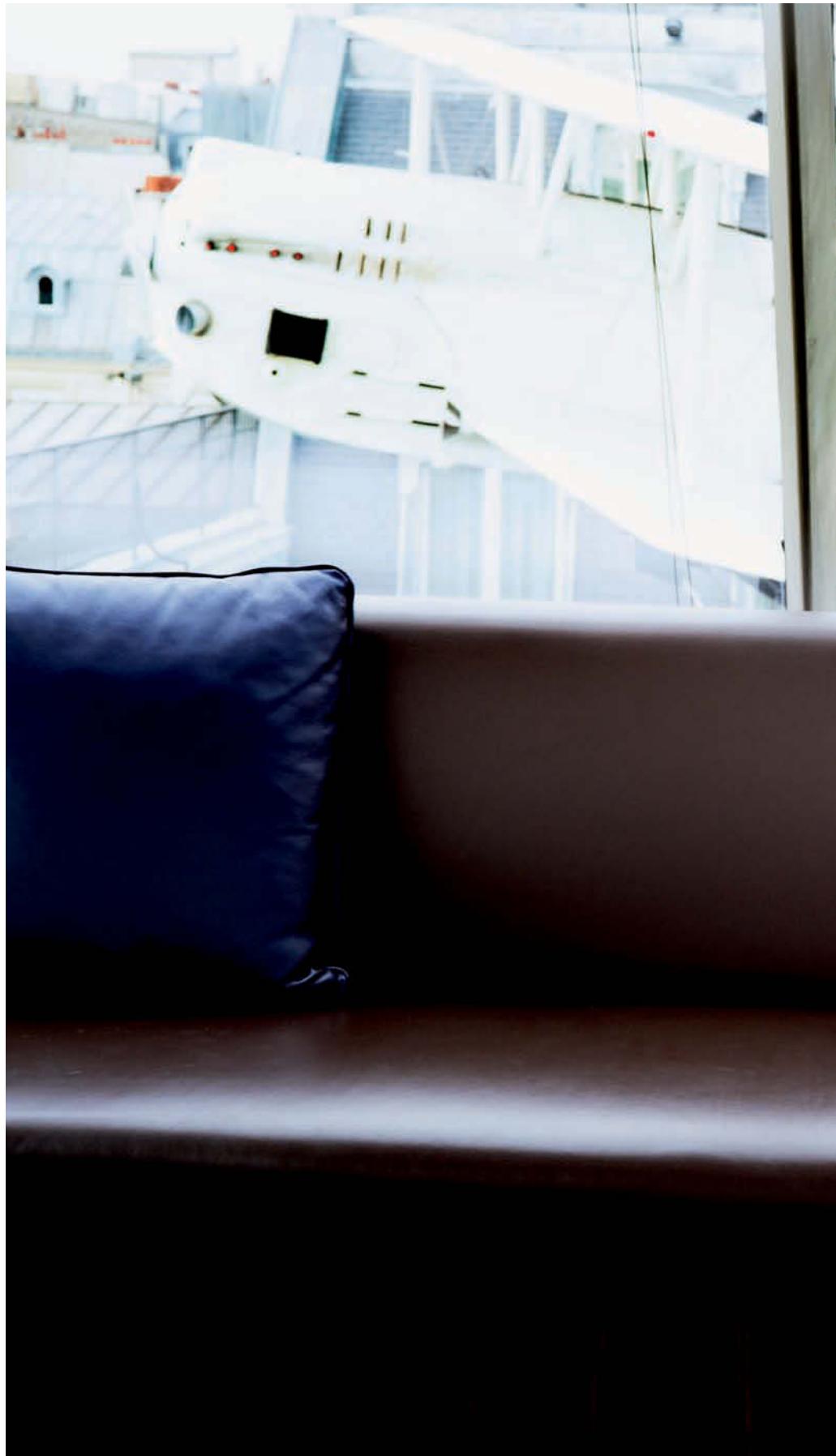
The rooftop terrace of the Katara Suite at The Peninsula Paris comes with enviable views of the Eiffel Tower

Dress, shoes; both by **Lanvin**.
Rings by **Repossi**

The aviation theme at restaurant L'Oiseau Blanc is reinforced by a replica of the plane of the same name that disappeared in 1927 during a transatlantic flight attempt

Dress, boots; both by **Dior**.
Earrings by **Repossi**

The challenge to cease what some call the eternal ostracism of the banlieues is part of a wider scheme to decentralise the city and heal the perceived divide between central Paris and its outer Petite Couronne







SURF

A
N
D



A waitress at Three Blue Ducks in Bronte, the perfect pit stop along the Bondi to Coogee coastal walk. **Opposite:** Bondi's waves are suited to surfers of all levels

Along the coast of Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, Bondi Beach is a surfer's paradise – but that's not its only draw. Spread across a kilometre of golden sand are a plethora of trendy, open-air restaurants, urban-style shops and beach bars with a lively buzz all day long

Written by LINZ ZHANG Photographed by DAVID YEOW

66 WITH MEXICAN AND
CENTRAL AMERICAN
INFLUENCES, IT'S ALL
ABOUT SOUTHERN
COMFORT FOOD:
BREAKFAST ON
HUEVOS RANCHEROS
OR ORDER THE HANGAR
STEAK AS THE SUN
GOES DOWN

THE ANCHOR SOUTH BONDI

At one of the area's most beloved sports bars, on the southern tip of Bondi Beach, exposed brick walls, wooden tables and chandeliers lend a sense of modernity to the pirate-themed interiors. The cocktail menu showcases a variety of small-batch spirits; there are seafront tables as well as private rooms for those looking for a quiet evening among friends. Popular music accompanies Chef Zac Pauling's signature dishes and trendy party-goers flock in for the late-night menu.

Entrées from AED 47; 0061-2-8084 3145, anchorbarbondi.com

PORCH & PARLOUR

A popular, rustic-looking corner café with a simple, creative and seasonal menu. Artfully decorated walls and elegant tile work lend a Mediterranean touch to the décor. Locals will vouch for the enormous breakfast options, but the dinner and lunch menus have their own following, too, washed down with a sizeable selection of grape, hops and spirits. Head to the bakery counter for an irresistible range of pancakes and lemon tarts.

Entrées from AED 50; 0061-2-9300 0111

A TAVOLA

A Tavola is considered Sydney's best place for authentic Italian pasta. The dining room is a large open space with gorgeous rose-gold lighting, flanked by a bar. Striving to stay fresh, the menu is updated and tweaked each week but the excellent handmade *pappardelle* is a regular feature. With a wide and well-chosen array of Italian grape, stop in for an overall satisfying experience.

Entrées from AED 55; 0061-2-9130 1246, atavola.com.au

From left:

Tempura prawn sushi at Paper Planes; the interior of Three Blue Ducks.

Opposite: Cucumber slaw at Three Blue Ducks



STUFFED BEAVER

Located on the seafront, this sports-lovers bar serves up classic American fare in a casual setting: hot dogs, chicken wings, hamburgers and spicy fries. Canadian goodies are also on offer, including *poutine* – a delicious, calorific concoction of piping hot fries smothered in gravy and melted cheese. It's just the spot to pull up a stump or debate a goal over a few pints of hops or a frozen cocktail.

Entrées from AED 35; 0061-2-9130 3002, stuffedbeaver.com.au

PANAMA HOUSE

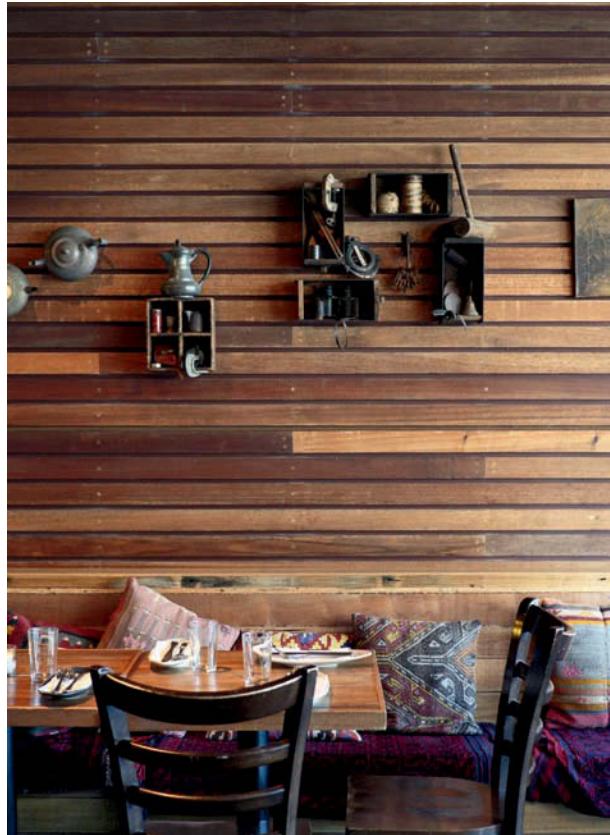
Panama House consists of three parts: a bar, a café and a restaurant, making it an all-day dining experience. The stylish décor juxtaposes polished concrete flooring with wooden beams. With Mexican and Central American influences, this place is all about Southern comfort food: breakfast on *huevos rancheros* (corn tortilla, spiced black beans, smashed avocado, eggs, salsa and chipotle hollandaise) or order the hangar steak and beetroot salad as the sun goes down. Don't skip dessert; the New York cheesecake and banoffee brûlée are marvellous.

Entrées from AED 40; 0061-2-9365 0839, panamahouse.com.au

GELATO MESSINA

Touted as the best gelato in Australia, the offerings here are made from natural ingredients and are preservative-free. The range of flavours is mind-boggling: Elvis the Fat Years is an indulgent delight made up of peanut butter gelato, fried brioche and banana jam. Patrons can also order a combo, like pear & rhubarb with chocolate fondant.

Gelatos from AED 23; 0061-1800-43 5286, gelatomessina.com





LA MACELLERIA

This delicatessen-cum-old-school butchery takes meat to new heights. The products are organic and the beef comes from grass-fed cattle. Paninis, roast chicken, steak, meat skewers and a wide range of salami are served amid vintage décor and terrazzo-tiled floors.

Entrées from AED 47; 0061-2-9300 6388, macelleria.com.au

SONOMA CAFÉ

These baking pioneers are known for their sourdough bread: the gravlax with boiled egg, ricotta and avocado on seeded rye sourdough is a must-try. The secret behind their speciality coffee is the in-house, single-origin roasted coffee beans. Hungry surfers and joggers can take advantage of the sunrise timings.

Entrées from AED 30; 0061-2-9130 1124, sonoma.com.au

NEED TO KNOW: BONDI

WHAT TO DO

Bondi to Coogee coastal walk

Setting out from Bondi Beach, the picturesque walk along the coast to Coogee takes you past magnificent cliffs and rock pools. Feast your eyes as you cross the beautiful beaches of Tamarama, Bronte and Clovelly. The six-kilometre walk takes about two hours to complete but stop along the way to rest, swim or duck in for a nibble at cafés like the quirky Three Blue Ducks in Bronte.►



From top:
Meat lovers shouldn't miss the top-quality beef and lamb at Macelleria; coffee at A Tavola



“THE RANGE OF FLAVOURS IS MIND-BOGGLING: ELVIS THE FAT YEARS IS AN INDULGENT DELIGHT MADE UP OF PEANUT BUTTER GELATO, FRIED BRIOCHE AND BANANA JAM”

Handmade pappardelle being prepared by staff at A Tavola

The Bondi Baths

These natural swimming pools along the coastline with panoramic views are the real jewels of Sydney. The pools are patrolled by qualified lifeguards and are chlorine-free.

Sculpture by the Sea

Sculpture by the Sea is the world's largest free-to-the-public outdoor sculpture exhibition, transforming the coastal line from Bondi up to Tamarama. It showcases over 100 works by artists from Australia and attracts hundreds of thousands of people each year.

sculpturebythesea.com

Art galleries

A number of art galleries around Bondi Beach are spaces not just for artists to exhibit but for like-minded creatives to exchange ideas as they sip coffee. The range extends from the Coo-ee Aboriginal Art Gallery to Aquabumps, which specialises in surf photography.

Surfing

Bondi is a south-facing beach that enables consistent surf conditions throughout the year. The waves are inviting to surfers of all experience levels, whether a tentative first-timer or a surf fanatic looking to ride the big one. An underwater shark net has been deployed about 150 metres from the beach and lifesavers and guards are accessible all along.

Markets

There are plenty of outdoor and covered markets across Sydney. The Bondi Market is held every Sunday (subject to weather conditions) on the beachfront between 10am and 4pm. In addition to local farmers' goods, the market also features designer clothing, exotic imports, handmade jewellery, artefacts and retro furniture.

WHEN TO GO

Sydney has a comfortable climate with mild winters and warm summers. The average minimum temperature in winter (June to August) is around 9°C. In the summer (December to February), the average maximum temperature is 26°C. Autumn (March to May) is beautiful, with relatively low humidity, and is one of the most pleasant times to visit. Be prepared for unexpected showers at any time of year. [CNT](#)

GETTING THERE

Qantas (qantas.com.au), Emirates (emirates.com), Etihad (etihad.com) and Qatar Airways (qatarairways.com) fly direct to Sydney from where it's a 25-minute drive to Bondi

Mexican tacos at Panama House



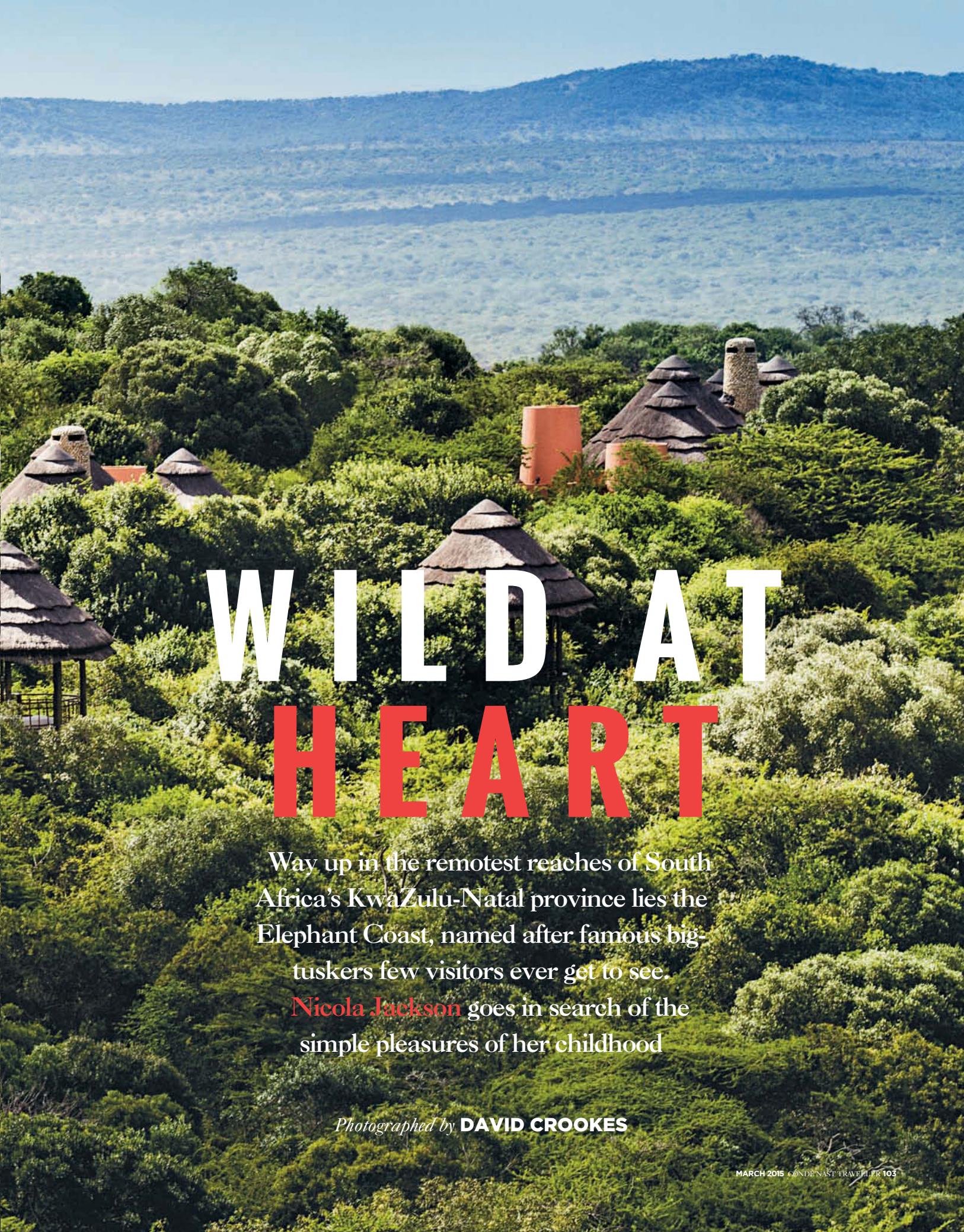


Clockwise from left: Bondi's bars are known for their creative concoctions; the farmer's market; *pappardelle* with lamb ragu at A Tavola; a skateboard-lined ceiling at Paper Planes; The Anchor South Bondi; graffiti art at Three Blue Ducks



At the Thanda Safari Lodge, buildings are inspired by Zulu homesteads





WILD AT HEART

Way up in the remotest reaches of South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province lies the Elephant Coast, named after famous big-tuskers few visitors ever get to see. **Nicola Jackson** goes in search of the simple pleasures of her childhood

Photographed by DAVID CROOKES

GREW UP ON THE KwaZulu-Natal coast of South Africa, building forts in the forested dunes and rock-pooling on the beach in front of our family home. There's a faded Polaroid of my parents, windswept and happy, posing in front of our beloved Land Rover on the edge of vast and empty Mapelane Beach. For me, it still captures the spirit of the region: somewhere for tomboys and dreamers to cut loose and breathe in the wood-smoked, salty air.

Few places on earth are as wild or dramatic as the Elephant Coast. It stretches for an epic 190km from Mapelane Beach in the south and races all the way up to the Mozambique border. There are beaches with no other swimmers in sight, waterways

brimming with water lilies and coral beds bedazzled with shoals of fish, eels and turtles. On any one day you can go snorkelling, spot a rhino and be mock-charged by an elephant bull.

It could have been very different. Two decades ago, permission was sought to mine the region's pristine sand dunes for titanium. Fortunately, the move was noisily opposed by conservationists, residents and even Nelson Mandela – despite the prospect of bringing employment to what is still one of South Africa's poorest and most underdeveloped parts – and the move was defeated.

Eight years ago, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park – which unites all the coastal forest and marine reserves along the Elephant Coast – was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status, and is now home to progressive conservationists and a fresh brand of passionate, community-driven tourism.

And so I was able to rediscover the KwaZulu-Natal of my childhood on a glorious 10-day road trip, heading north from Durban, dipping in and out of vastly different landscapes: the peaceful, glittering wetlands of St Lucia; the pounding Indian Ocean shoreline; open plains; dense sand forests; high, rocky outcrops. Happily, this is still very much my idea of heaven, as wild as when Portuguese explorers first spied these astonishingly beautiful bays in the 15th century.

DOWN BY THE SEA AND LAKES

Heading north on the N2 motorway, sugarcane-coated hills give way to perfumed blue-gum forests that come to an abrupt halt at a simple metal fence. Beyond this is the protected iSimangaliso Wetland Park

(it means "miracle and wonder" in Zulu) where untempered sand forests scribble crazy patterns on the landscape, and wild gardenias sweat beads of oxygen. The park is a sort of puzzle clicked together using pieces of commercial forestry, former military sites and state-owned property. It includes 85,000 hectares of marine reserve, over 200km of virtually uninterrupted coastline and has eight interlinking eco-systems with extraordinary, endemic creatures and plants which can now be explored on horseback, foot, by motor or water-based safaris.

We spent our first night at Makakatana Bay Lodge, on an island of private land slap bang in the middle of the World Heritage Site, surrounded by the muddled trunks and interlocking branches of a deep sand forest. Owned by the Morrison family since the early 1900s, this was once a trading post set

up to supply Durban with fresh seafood and to barter animal skins and corn with villagers. The only evidence of its past is a crumbling cement crab-house trapped under the grip of a strangler fig tree. A few years ago you could eat here, but nature has won that battle. Instead, you sit by an open fire with your feet in the fine sand of the forest floor, or on the estuary's brim, keeping a wary eye out for hippos and crocodiles.

On a morning drive to the beach at Cape Vidal, we passed Okavango Delta-like water pans, bleached grasslands and the giraffes and antelope – nyala, kudu, impala and waterbuck – that populate this landscape. Once near the shoreline, we hiked up one of the 25,000-year-old dunes at Mission Rocks lookout. Below, intense forests of flowering albizzia, milkwood, acacia and buffalo thorn tangled together; turning around, our eyes▶

A lion in Thanda Private Game Reserve on South Africa's Elephant Coast



Dumile Nene, a traditional singer at Thanda

The lodge at Thanda, one of the most sophisticated outfits here, is built into the hills where tribal hunters once tracked their prey



were flooded with the blue-on-blue brightness of sea and sky.

Cape Vidal is a crescent-shaped beach with a rocky ridge that reaches out like a protective arm against the force of the Indian Ocean. The sand here is cinnamon-tinged and the water is warm and silky; there are happy holidaymakers and day trippers snorkelling and sandcastle-building, and anglers standing sentry against a backdrop of that never-ending coastline of dunes and pounding surf.

HEADING FOR THE HILLS

Just an hour's drive inland from the iSimangaliso Wetland Park is Hluhluwe-iMfolozi, one of the oldest game reserves in Africa, famous for saving the white rhino from extinction in the Fifties and now home to the largest population in the world. The reserve covers 960sqkm of forested hills and open savannah criss-crossed with dung-coloured rivers. The roads are riddled with potholes so driving here is a bit like playing Tetris: you have to aim for the remaining islands of tar. But that's what Hluhluwe-

iMfolozi is all about: absolutely nothing about it is contrived, measured nor tamed.

At our base, Nselweni Bush Camp, there is no host, no guide and we have to cook on firewood we've brought in by ourselves. It's also unfenced. That night we heard our neighbours shouting "voetsak!" ("bugger off" in Afrikaans) at a hyena interested in their supper. Later we watched transfixed as it paddled closer and closer to the dying embers of our fire to lick the charred meat off our barbecue grill, its haggard face grimaced in the lamplight like a child's imagined monster.

Over two days in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi we saw 60 elephants and 21 rhinos, three of which were swinging from a helicopter transporting them – blindfolded, sedated and upended – to the capture unit at the reserve's Centenary Centre, from where they would be moved to a new life elsewhere (about 6,000 animals a year are translocated in this way).

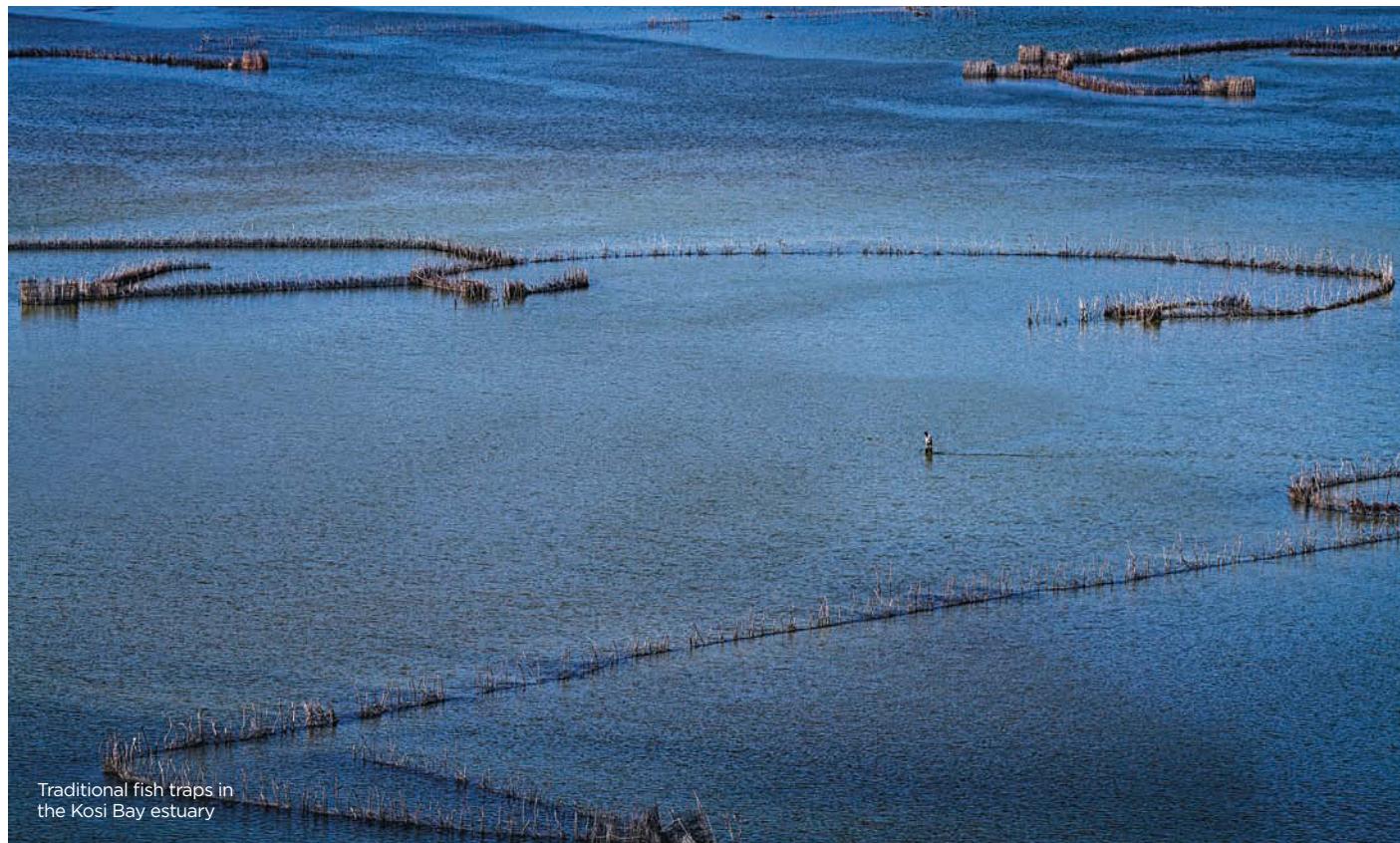
A 40-minute drive north of Nselweni Camp is Thanda Private Game Reserve, the most sophisticated outfit in this part of the country (other than the world-famous Phinda

reserve). Thanda Safari Lodge is built into the hills where Shaka Zulu's hunters once tracked their prey and the structures are inspired by the circular buildings of traditional homesteads, with cement floors, thatched roofs and enough decorative touches to remind you of where you are in the world. Indeed, the rhythm of the Zulu nation is everywhere. You can talk to trackers who know the medicinal value of plants flourishing in these hills, get goosebumps listening to a women's choir and gulp at the gut-wrenching power, dust and fury of the Indlamu and Isicathamiya dance.

...AND BACK DOWN TO THE SEA

From Thanda we set off seaward again, re-entering the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, to Thonga Beach Lodge in the Coastal Forest Reserve. Built right on the forested sand dunes, it has 12 little raffia-thatched cottages tucked into the dune vegetation and reached by raised wooden walkways. Weather-beaten and laid-back with a blissful, beach-bum tempo, there are nevertheless plenty of things to do: snorkelling, diving, a visit to the ▶

The sand is cinnamon-tinged and the water is warm and silky; there are happy holidaymakers and day trippers snorkelling and sandcastle-building



Traditional fish traps in the Kosi Bay estuary

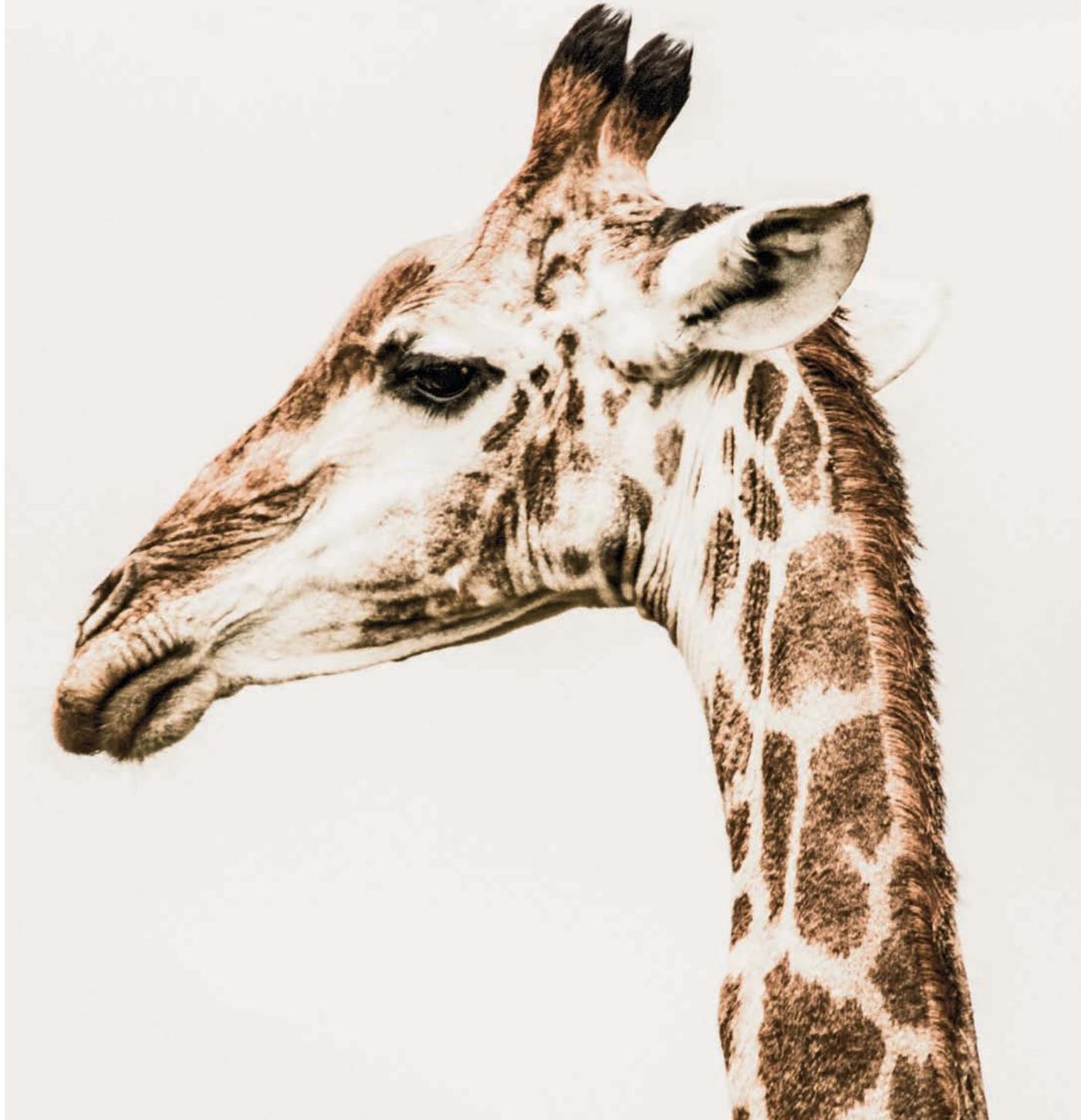


A family of elephants
on parade through
the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi
game reserve



The traditional Indlamu
and Isicathamiya
dance performed by
the Zulu people

A giraffe at Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve, the park famous for saving the white rhino from extinction in the Fifties



The rhythm of the Zulu nation is everywhere – it's in the power, dust and fury of the Indlamu and Isicathamiya dance

Mabibi community, kayaking on Lake Sibaya (South Africa's largest freshwater lake). Or you can just lie on the beach and grow freckles. Between November and January, endangered leatherback turtles nest along these shores and there are night drives from the lodge to watch hatchlings make their first journey into the Indian Ocean waves.

AT LAST, THE ORIGINAL ELEPHANTS

The Elephant Coast takes its name from the region's indigenous big-tuskers found in the remote Tembe Elephant Park, an hour's drive from Thonga Beach Lodge right up on the Mozambique border. The road there is long, straight and surprisingly well maintained, but the park is serious four-wheel drive territory with sand roads that are slowly being reclaimed by nature; it's lush and getting lusher by the day. But it is these impenetrable forests that have helped save the park's elephants from poachers, and also keep visitor numbers down (Tembe remains largely unknown, even to South Africans). We

stayed at Tembe Safari Lodge – part-owned and managed by the Tembe community – a simple tented camp with outdoor showers, wholesome bush cooking and terrific guides including Tom Mahamba, who can read the bush like a book.

On our first night, Mahamba cut the engine and a herd of 20 elephants surrounded us, their enormous tusks glowing in the low light, the matriarch's belly rumbling and reverberating as she passed us in the encroaching darkness.

OF FORESTS AND FISHING

About an hour and 20 minutes' drive east from Tembe is Kosi Forest Lodge, built beneath a canopy of trees, including an impressive Zulu podberry that gives a permanent dapple effect to the light. It's a secluded camp with a romantic, down-to-earth vibe, but there's plenty to do, including canoeing in the luxuriant Sihadla channel. Even the walk there is poetic, through a dense jungle with golden orb spiders clinging to backlit webs and rubber vines making doodles in the air. From

the canoe you look up into the endemic raffia-palm forest with its massive spiked fronds, and linger in primal waterways plied by a single ferry made from raffia stems held together with wooden pegs.

At first sight, the traditional Tsongan fish traps built in the tidal shallows of the Kosi Bay lake system look like an artist's installation. One of the Tsongan fishermen, Almon Mkhonto, told me how this sustainable method of fishing has been passed down from father to son for generations. Built out of mangrove branches and bound together with rope made from banana fibre, the curved fences drive the fish to an ingenious one-way valve made of twigs and into a final, circular trap. Engineered to catch only mature fish leaving the estuary after reproducing, gaps in the fence lines let the smaller fish pass through safely. Mkhonto presented us with a magnificent kingfish from his trap, and later that evening the lodge chefs prepared it in traditional Tsongan style: fried whole, served in a rich soup made from local groundnuts. It was the best meal of our trip. **CNT**

WHERE TO STAY: ELEPHANT COAST

Makakanana Bay Lodge

Situated within a World Heritage Site; teeming with wildlife and steeped in history.

Doubles from AED 1,830 including activities; 0027-35-550 4198, makakananabaylodge.com

Nselweni Bush Camp

A rustic and authentic safari camp experience. *Doubles from AED 410; 0027-33-845 1000, www.kznwildlife.com*

Thanda Safari Lodge

Combines Zulu culture with an elegant and refined luxury setting. *Doubles from AED 3,000 (per person) all inclusive; 0027-35-573 1899, thanda.com*

Thonga Beach Lodge

Heavenly beaches, a laid-back vibe and marine life aplenty. *Doubles from AED 1,050 (per person) including*

meals, guided walks and some activities; 0027-35-474473, thongabeachlodge.co.za

Tembe Safari Lodge

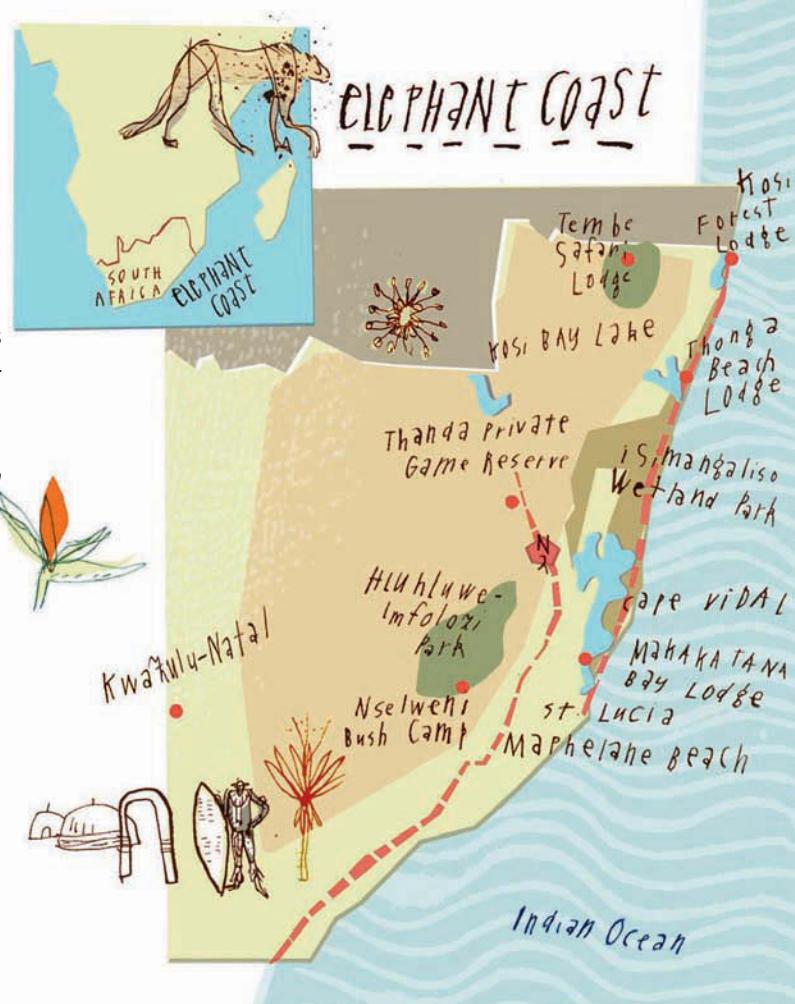
A charming lodge run by welcoming and knowledgeable members of the Tembe community. *Doubles from AED 405 (per person) all inclusive, excluding drinks; 0027-82-651 2868, tembe.co.za*

Kosi Forest Lodge

Rustic and outdoorsy while also romantic and sophisticated. *Doubles from AED 660 (per person) including some activities; 0027-35-474 1473, isibindi.co.za*

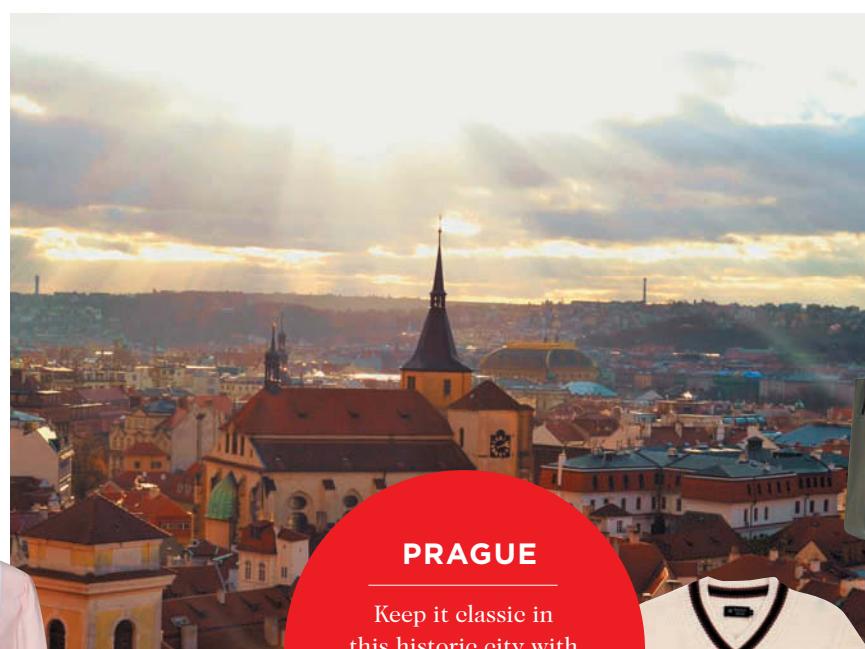
GETTING THERE

Emirates (emirates.com) flies direct to Durban from where it is a three-hour drive to St Lucia



Get the look

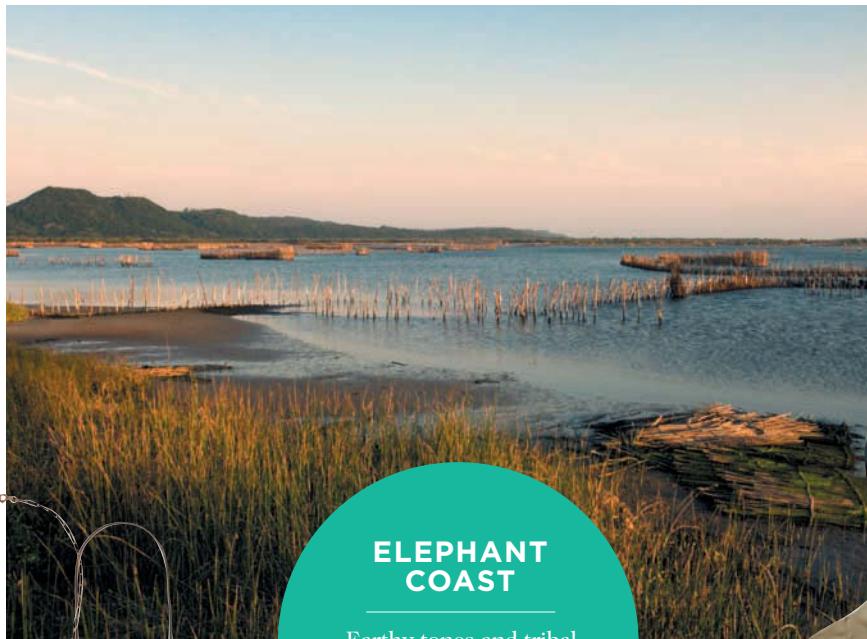
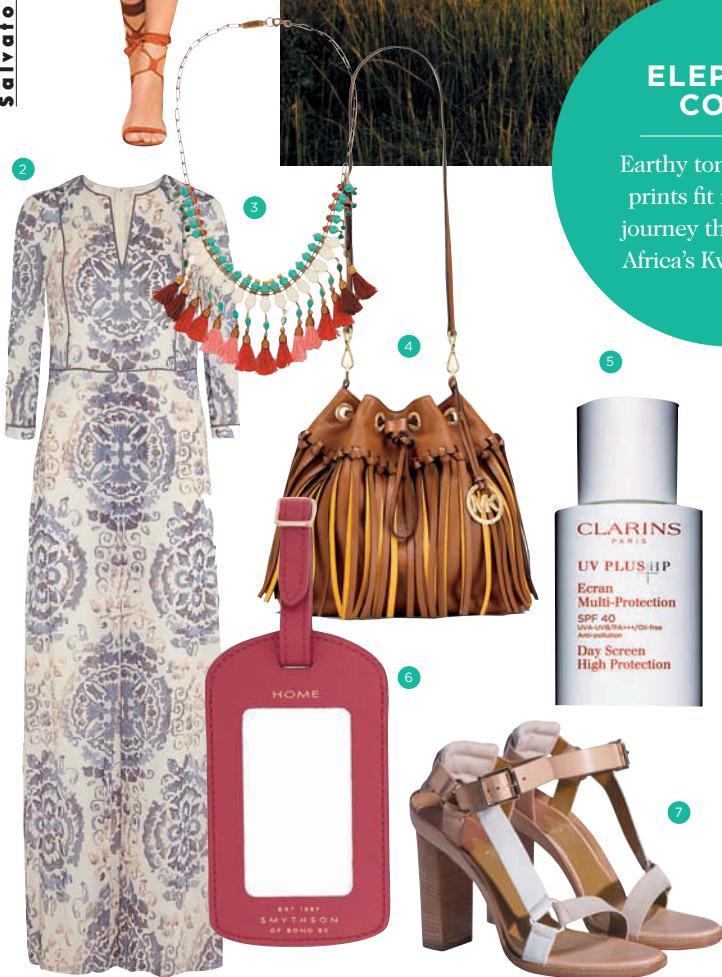
Pack right for this month's destinations



PRAGUE

Keep it classic in this historic city with warm, tonal layers, smart basics and sharp accessories





ELEPHANT COAST

Earthy tones and tribal prints fit right in on a journey through South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal



1 Sun hat, AED 620, **Sensi Studio** at boutique1.com **2** Dress, AED 3,160, **Tory Burch**
3 Necklace, AED 1,630, **Isabel Marant** **4** Bag, AED 1,200, **MICHAEL Michael Kors**
5 Clarins UV Plus HP SPF 40 Day Screen, AED 213 **6** Luggage tag, AED 1,028,
Smythson **7** Sandals, AED 3,273, **Paul Smith**

1 Bag, AED 1,800, **Longchamp** **2** Polo shirt, AED 1,617, **dunhill**
3 Sunglasses, AED 1,645, **Dolce & Gabbana** **4** Belt, AED 1,568, **Missoni**
5 Kiehl's Post Shave Repair Gel, AED 100 **6** Trousers, AED 2,688, **Berluti**
7 Sandals, AED 3,470, **Philipp Plein**



This plateau towers above a sea of clouds as if it were an iceberg or a spaceship. Under the cloudscape lies land belonging to three different countries that were formerly colonies of three European nations. Of the three, the only one that is Spanish-speaking is the departure point for a six-day trek. You'll soon realise that this is not science fiction but nature at its purest. As you climb, you'll cross several rivers and pass through areas with a range of different climatic conditions, from tropical heat to heavy rain and low nocturnal temperatures. Prepare to have your shoes and socks soaked through, and to wear long sleeves and enough insect repellent to ward off the *puri-puri*. While it may sound arduous, it's the price you pay for an amazing experience. Having scaled the steep paths, it's like you've passed into another world: at the top is a labyrinth of crags and ravines several hundred metres deep. Owing to the steep cliff-face – an obstacle most animals can't get past – and the climate, the plateau has a unique ecosystem of flora and fauna. The highest point stands at 2,810m above sea level and, though only five per cent of the mountain is in the largest country of this continent, it shares its name with one of the states of that country. Where are you?

PRIZE

Email your answer identifying the mountain and countries where this photograph was taken to contest@appgulf.com and you could win a three-night stay for two at Bunga Raya Island Resort & Spa, Malaysian Borneo. See overleaf for details and look out for the answer in the May issue.

Where are, you?



WORDS: ANDI KLING; PHOTO: PHILIP LEE HARVEY/AGE

Contest

Win a three-night stay for two at Bunga Raya Island Resort & Spa, Malaysian Borneo

SET ON A BEAUTIFUL CORAL REEF ISLAND

off the coast of Malaysian Borneo, this secluded resort with its lush jungle vegetation and pristine crescent-shaped beaches offers a tranquil getaway. The 48 timbered villas reflect the simplicity of Borneo's traditional architecture fused with modern comforts – like Frette linens and Bose music systems – and each one is handcrafted by local artisans. Laze by your private watering hole in the Plunge Pool Villas, choose from a range of water sports or explore the mangroves and spot wildlife as you trek along the rainforest trails. Sample Asian delights at The Koi restaurant or enjoy fresh seafood platters from the resort's own fish farm at Pantai Grill. At the hilltop Solace Spa, the jungle sounds and natural water feature in each of the foliage-fringed rooms lull you into a state of bliss.

To win a three-night stay for two in a Plunge Pool Villa at Bunga Raya Island Resort & Spa, including daily breakfast, one set dinner at Longhouse Restaurant and a signature massage for two, correctly identify the location of this issue's **Where are you?** competition before March 31, 2015.

Reservations are subject to availability. The prize is valid through March 31, 2016, is non-transferable, cannot be redeemed for cash and does not include public holidays. Transfers, mini bar and all other expenses not stated in this prize are subject to payment either on consumption or departure. For more information, call 0060-88-38 0390 or visit bungarayaresort.com



The Plunge Pool Villa has a private deck with beach and ocean views



The resort's secluded crescent-shaped beach. **Below:** The two-storey, hilltop 3-Bedroom Deluxe Suite



WINNER: JANUARY 2015

The winner of January's Where are you? competition is **Danielle Westrich** of Dubai who correctly identified the location of the picture as Lake Hillier in the Recherche Archipelago, Western Australia. She won a three-night stay at Atlantis The Palm, Dubai.



COMPETITION RULES 1. Entries for Condé Nast Traveller's Where are you? competition should be sent via email to: contest@appgulf.com. 2. Winners will be judged at the discretion of Condé Nast Traveller. The decision of the judges will be final and binding. No correspondence will be entertained. Only one correct answer will be registered per entrant per issue. 3. Each entry must arrive no later than March 31, 2015. Winners will be contacted by email or telephone whenever possible. 4. The entries must be in English and complete in all respects. 5. Condé Nast Traveller is not responsible for late entries. Illegible or mechanically produced entries are not eligible. Entries by text message are not eligible. 6. Prizes will not be transferred or exchanged for cash or any other item. No refunds or credits for changes or cancellations are allowed. All other expenses and costs, which are not specified as being included in the prize, are the sole responsibility of the winner. 7. All prizes must be redeemed prior to the expiry date. 8. Taxes, if any, are the sole responsibility of the winner. 9. The Where are you? competition is open to readers of Condé Nast Traveller aged 18 and over on the date of entry and who are ordinarily residents of the GCC. 10. Employees of Condé Nast Traveller (Arab Publishing Partners), ITP, participating promotional agencies, contributors to Condé Nast Traveller, and the families of any of those above are not eligible to contest. 11. All entries to the Where are you? competition become the sole property of Condé Nast Traveller and will not be acknowledged nor returned. 12. Entries become the property of Condé Nast Traveller and may be used for such purpose and in such media as the company deems fit, without requiring the participant's prior permission. 13. Acceptance of the prize constitutes consent for the use of the winner's name and likeness and those of his/her travelling companion for editorial, advertising and publicity purposes. 14. Condé Nast Traveller will not be liable for any loss, damage or expense incurred by a prize winner or by his/her travelling companion (for example, costs of repatriation) as a consequence of any party participating in providing the prize becoming insolvent or entering into liquidation or bankruptcy. 15. Condé Nast Traveller reserves the right to amend any or all of the terms of this contest, or the prizes on offer, at any time without prior notice. 16. Contestants, by entering the competition, agree to be bound by the above rules, terms and conditions.



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WHEN BUSINESS IS PLEASURE

On-demand service and plenty of space make working in the sky a breeze



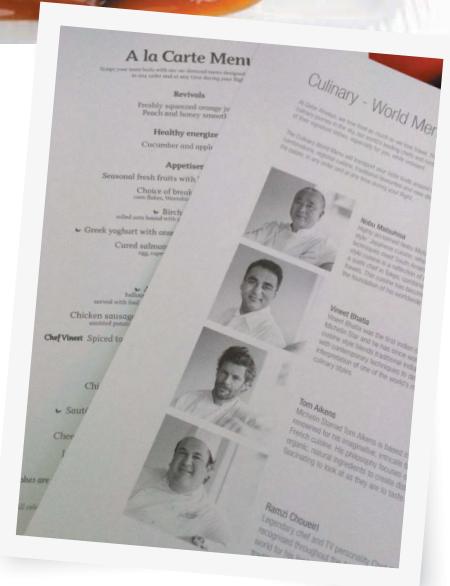
Relax with a drink and a selection of canapés or catch up on work in The Lounge aboard the A380

THE PREMIUM LOUNGE ON THE upper deck of the Qatar Airways' A380 may have been conceived, originally, as a social area, where passengers can stretch their legs and mingle in an elegant bar-like environment as they sip on any number of freshly shaken-up cocktails accompanied by tasty plated snacks. But for the *Condé Nast Traveller* team, on a recent trip from Doha to Paris, the lounge served a dual purpose: as a makeshift meeting space. Over cupcakes (there's a tempting display right at the edge of the bar) and *café au lait*, shoot concepts were discussed, logistics run through and details wrapped up, all as we lounged comfortably on sofa seating in what felt like our own very exclusive boardroom.

That's not to say that there's any dearth of space when it comes to passenger seating on board the A380. Configured in a 1-2-1 pattern in the Business Class cabin, the roomy seats have large fold-out tables – ideal for balancing a laptop alongside documents – as well as extra

surface space by the window to set your drink down without getting in the way of your work. When not working, there's plenty to keep you occupied with the Oryx entertainment system, where new movies and TV shows play on 17in screens that come with one of the most intuitive touchscreen controls we've encountered. The lie-flat bed maxes out at 80in, with plenty of room to spare.

The on-demand meal service worked well with the odd hours we'd kept planning the shoot. On sectors out of Doha, menus include a dish from one of the celebrity chefs on Qatar Airways' roster, which includes Nobu Matsuhisa, Tom Aikens, Vineet Bhatia and Ramzi Choueiri, representing a range of cuisines between them. On our morning flight to Paris, a flavourful scrambled egg dish from Michelin-starred Chef Vineet was a highlight. And in anticipation of our imminent arrival in one of the great gastronomic cities in the world, we finished off with dessert from Ladurée, setting just the right tone for landing.
qatarairways.com



From top: Qatar Airways' A380; an entrée of yellow tail tuna with teriyaki and truffle sauce by celebrity chef Nobu Matsuhisa; four top master chefs were chosen to create the menu for premium travellers

Stockists

FASHION

3.1 Phillip Lim at daduluxe.com

Acne Studios at Mr Porter: mrporter.com

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Berluti Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-643 2068; Dubai, 00971-4-399 6443; Doha, 00974-4-416 1860; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0580

Bottega Veneta Dubai, 00971-4-325 3981; Doha, 00974-4-450 7354; Manama, 00973-1-332 0000; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9666; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2341

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Equipment equipmentfr.com

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Dubai, 00971-4-339 9782; Doha, 00974-4-460 0945; Manama, 00973-1-332 0505; Jeddah, 00966-12-284 2803; Riyadh, 00966-11-462 6098

Gucci Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 6844; Dubai, 00971-4-341 0669; Doha, 00974-4-413 4612; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9997; Jeddah, 00966-12-668 7034; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2627

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Helmut Lang at Bloomingdale's:

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Levi's at Bambah Boutique: Dubai, 00971-4-349 5585

Loewe Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-412 4015; Dubai, 00971-4-325 3754

Longchamp Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-412 4075; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8460; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7810; Riyadh, 00966-11-281 5470; at Saks Fifth Avenue: Manama, 00973-1-717 2000

MaxMara Dubai, 00971-4-388 2070; Doha, 00974-44-375 7968; Manama, 00973-1-713 1015; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0569

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Missoni Dubai, 00971-4-339 8686; Riyadh 00966-11-461 2899;

Mochi Dubai, 00971-4-443 3451; allthingsmochi.com

Mulberry Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-412 4010; Dubai, 00971-4-325 3882; Doha, 00974-4-495 3876 ext 1111; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7790

Paul Smith Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-412 4000; Dubai, 00971-4-395 1410; Doha, 00974-4-493 2524; Manama, 00973-1-717 9564; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7801; Jeddah, 00966-12-275 4632

Philipp Plein Dubai 00971-4-339 8262

Pierre Hardy at Boutique 1: Dubai, 00971-4-425 7888

Prada Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-491 9287; Dubai, 00971-4-501 6990; Doha, 00974-4-464 4908; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9782

Retrosuperfuture at The Zoo: Dubai, 00971-55-224 1538

Saint Laurent by Hedi Slimane Abu Dhabi,

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Tod's at Net-a-Porter: net-a-porter.com

Tory Burch Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-616 6999; Dubai 00971-4-325 3670; Manama, 00973-1-711 2718; Kuwait, 00965-2-220 0594; Jeddah 00966-12-641 0455

Vilebrequin Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-644 5696; Dubai, 00971-4-392 7456

BEAUTY

Arganica arganicaoil.com

Bobbi Brown Dubai, 00971-4-330 8151; Manama, 00973-1-717 8323

Chanel at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

Clarins at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

Dior at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

Diptyque Dubai, 00971-4-330 8423; Doha, 00974-6-690 0224; Manama, 00873-1-758 1228

Dolce & Gabbana at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

Elie Saab Dubai, 00971-4-330 8222

Giorgio Armani Dubai, 00971-4-339 8121; Jeddah, 00966-12-664 0703; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2630; Doha 00974-4-430 2101

Green Bar at Snob Salon & Boutique: 00971-4-338 6600

House of Sillage at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008

Huda Beauty at Sephora: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-445 3690; Dubai, 00971-4-339 9828; Doha, 00974-4-450 7345; Manama, 00973-1-717 9521; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7769; Jeddah, 00966-12-215 0496; Riyadh, 00966-11-207 8075

Kiehl's Dubai, 00971-4-330 8843

La Mer at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

La Prairie at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228



Dress by **Lanvin**.
Earrings, rings; all
by **Repossi**

3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

Laura Mercier at Bloomingdale's: Dubai, 00971-4-350 5333

MAC Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-695 8229; Dubai, 00971-4-419 0422; Muscat, 00968-24-47 0581; Doha, 00974-4-413 5069; Manama, 00973-1-758 2757; Kuwait City, 00965-2-224 4706; Jeddah, 00966-12-215 0408; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2597

REN at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888

Shiseido at Sephora: Dubai, 00971-4-339 9828; Doha, 00974-4-450 7345; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7769; Riyadh, 00966-11-207 8075

Sisley at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

YSL at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

WATCHES & JEWELLERY

Balmain at Rivoli: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 3035; Dubai, 00971-4-341 3121; Muscat, 00968-2-455 8290; Doha, 00974-4-479 0107

Bil Arabi at s*uce: Dubai, 00971-4-344 7270

Chanel Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 1030; Dubai, 00971-4-382 7100; Kuwait City, 00965-2-245 9290; Jeddah, 00966-12-667 8436; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2710

Gucci at Rivoli: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 3035; Dubai, 00971-4-341 3121; Muscat, 00968-2-455 8290; Doha, 00974-4-479 0107

Hermès Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-666 9720; Dubai, 00971-4-351 1190; Doha, 00974-6-601 1882; Manama, 00973-1-753 5519; Kuwait City, 00965-2-227 0215

Isabel Marant at Boutique 1: Dubai, 00971-4-425 7888

Louis Vuitton Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681

2166; Dubai, 00971-4-330 8060; Doha, 00974-4-413 4931; Manama, 00973-1-753 7543; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0522; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2705

Repossi at Istana Jewellers: Dubai, 00971-4-352 0002; at Ali Bin Ali: Doha, 00974-4-413 1391; Riyadh, 00966-11-465 9339

Stone stoneparis.com

MISCELLANEOUS

American Tourister at Transit: Dubai, 00971-4-388 2558

Anya Hindmarch at Net-a-Porter: net-a-porter.com

Fujifilm at West LA: Dubai, 00971-4-394 4248

Smythson at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

MOST WANTED

A look at what caught our eye this month, from exotic escapes to beauty treats



Skin saviours

Travelling can wreak havoc on the skin. Counteract the effects with Endermolift by LPG – the latest anti-ageing technique available in top spas around the UAE. This non-invasive, pain-free treatment using an Ergolift head and a unique cosmetics line inspired by Endermologie drains toxins to reduce puffiness and dark circles, firms and softens skin and gently exfoliates to improve brightness so you'll be fresh-faced and ready for your next adventure in no time.

lpgsystems.com



Weekend getaway

The emirate of Ras Al Khaimah is home to beautiful beaches, luxe hotels and scenic mountains, and is a popular weekend getaway for visitors from the GCC. Those looking for an escape from the hustle and bustle of the city can indulge in fun-filled adventures with Hilton Hotels & Resorts' new packages at their chain of hotels. Stays at Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah, Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Resort & Spa, Hilton Al Hamra Beach & Golf Resort, DoubleTree by Hilton Ras Al Khaimah and DoubleTree by Hilton Resort & Spa Marjan Island are on offer at 25 per cent off and start from AED 330 including breakfast when travelling from March to May. From diving and jet-skiing to sailing and golf, there's plenty of activities to keep everyone entertained. Or simply laze under a parasol or unwind at a tranquil spa for a more relaxing escape.

00971-7-206 5296; hiltonhotelsmea.com/rak



THE FUTURE OF FASHION

Dubai is a hub for emerging designers and is gaining attention around the globe. With the aim to provide a dynamic platform for a new generation of global designers, *Vogue Italia* together with The Dubai Mall will again host the fashion fiesta Vogue Fashion Dubai Experience. The event, held later this year, will showcase the latest fashion trends and host talks by international talent, and in anticipation, the second edition of The Dubai Mall talent-scouting competition has now begun. Selected menswear, womenswear and accessory designers can win the chance to showcase their creations to a prestigious jury of fashion representatives.

Find out more at vogue.it/en/talents/the-dubai-mall-talent-scouting

TRULY THAI

Thailand is a tropical getaway full of cultural treasures. With feasts and festivals throughout the year, March is the month for Muay Thai (Thai boxing). In this one-of-a-kind martial art, all body parts are used as weapons to fight the opponent, making for a fast and furious sight. If you're considering travelling to the land of smiles in April, be prepared to get soaked. Fun and frolics mark the celebration of Songkran as the sun enters into a new zodiac (Taurus to Aries) and splashing water is believed to cast away bad luck and bring harmony.

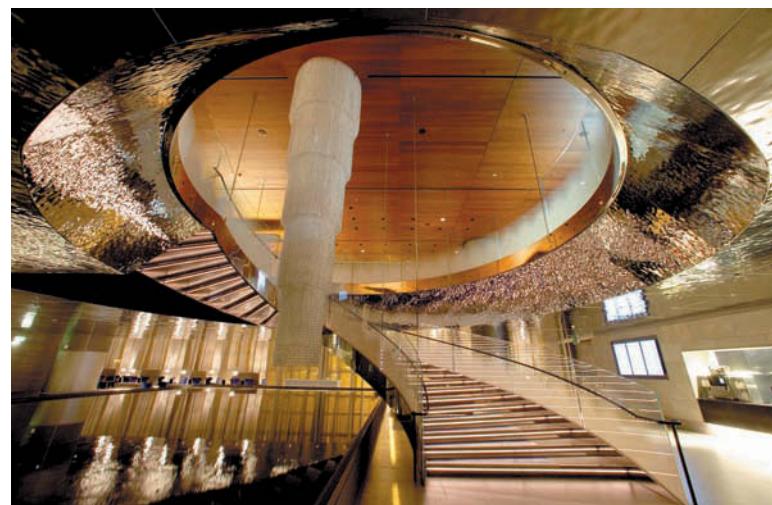
tourismthailand.org



Viva España

In a vibrant setting centred around an open-plan kitchen that showcases chefs working their magic, Salero Tapas & Bodega at Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates draws crowds hungry for a taste of authentic Spanish cuisine. Choose from a selection of tapas or platters before the Spanish cheese assortment marks a perfect end to your meal. As you indulge, flamenco dancers put on a colourful show followed by a live DJ who takes you into the night. Priced at AED 250 including unlimited Spanish cocktails and AED 350 including house beverages, experience a true Spanish fiesta every Friday between 1pm and 4pm.

00971-4-409 5888, kempinski.com



Doha's five-star gateway

The new, ultra-modern Hamad International Airport, Doha is the ninth largest airport in the world, encompassing around 11 square miles. A shopping emporium with 70 retail outlets, 30 cafés and restaurants, a contemporary hotel, squash courts, a deluxe spa, an aquatic-themed mosque and exhibitions by international artists make for a memorable experience during long layovers, while sleek check-in desks alongside lounge-style seating add to the comfort. A focal point of the airport is a giant, 16,000kg teddy bear sculpture by Urs Fischer, which was previously on display in front of the Seagram Building on New York's Park Avenue before being acquired by a member of the Qatari royal family. With 16 lounges featuring five-star facilities and world-class amenities, including the resort-like Qatar Airways Al Mourjan Business Lounge, this is one airport you might want to arrive at early.

dohahamadairport.com



Spa-topia

The award-winning Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, well known for its idyllic surroundings on the unspoilt Noonu Atoll in the Maldives, has given its spa a French makeover in partnership with Thalgo France, bringing together the healing principles of East and West. Located at the heart of the island with 20 individual spa treatment rooms, hydrotherapy pools, steam and sauna rooms and a concept of "organic earth and vibrant sea", The Spa by Thalgo combines Ayurvedic principles with modern practices for a holistic approach. In addition to the vast array of treatments on offer like the Chocolate Delight or Vinotherapy, the spa also boasts signature journeys such as Terre & Mer and Sea & Senses, taking a unique, personalised approach to health and beauty rituals.

00960-656 0591, thesunsiyam.com/irufushi

Room with a view

UAE Al Maha, A Luxury Collection Desert Resort & Spa

Guests can explore the reserve with two complimentary on-site activities per day, including horse riding, guided nature walks, wildlife safaris, archery, falconry and camel trekking



BEDOUIN SUITE

Wake up in your oversized king bed to dramatic vistas of golden, crescent-shaped sand dunes stretching for miles across the 225sqkm protected Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve, which feels worlds apart from Downtown Dubai just 45 minutes away – particularly when an Arabian oryx or a desert gazelle happens to wander nonchalantly past. Antiques and rare artefacts are strewn amongst handcrafted Arabian furnishings, and just outside, a private infinity pool – available in all 42 suites – glistens under the warm rays of

the sun. Lazing poolside in the middle of the desert may seem experience enough but rouse yourself for a horse ride or archery session; it would be remiss not to schedule a visit to the Timeless Spa, where treatments are inspired by Middle Eastern aromatherapy traditions. This is Bedouin-style camping at its finest.

Bedouin Suite from AED 2,900 per person all-inclusive (based on double occupancy); 00971-4-832 9900, al-maha.com



THE SUN SIYAM IRU FUSHI MALDIVES



Located a 45-minute scenic seaplane ride from Male in the unspoilt Noonu Atoll, The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi rises like a pearl out of the Indian Ocean. Set within 52 acres of white sands and exotic flora, here guests are immersed in a timeless culture. From the intuitive detail and personalised service that creates the most beautiful of memories, to the sublime ambience that permeates each unforgettable taste, touch and experience, at Iru Fushi the incredible awaits.

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YOU MUST FIRST MASTER
THEM.

THE VALLÉE DE JOUX, FOR MILLENNIA A HARSH, UNYIELDING ENVIRONMENT; AND SINCE 1875 THE HOME OF AUDEMARS PIGUET, IN THE VILLAGE OF LE BRASSUS. THE EARLY WATCHMAKERS WERE SHAPED HERE, IN AWE OF THE FORCE OF NATURE YET DRIVEN TO MASTER ITS MYSTERIES THROUGH THE COMPLEX MECHANICS OF THEIR CRAFT. STILL TODAY THIS PIONEERING SPIRIT INSPIRES US TO CONSTANTLY CHALLENGE THE CONVENTIONS OF FINE WATCHMAKING.

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